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MASTERSINGERS

Mastersingers

Appreciations of Music and Musicians

with

an Essay on Hector Berlioz

BY

FILSON YOUNG

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TO DOCTOR JAMES KENDRICK PYNE

My Dear Master

To write your name here is to levy rather than to render a tribute of friendship; yet for the sake of past days you will not, I know, grudge me this decoration for my page. For as the dullest pupil may boast an illustrious master, so I may advertise what is, I fear, my only title to distinction in this art: that, through you, I am in the direct apostolic succession that handed on from the Wesleys to your own family the treasure of a gift brought therein well-nigh to perfection. You did not even omit the "laying on of hands"—in my case, alas! of little avail. Yet if there is anything here at all worthy, anything upon which a master may look without shame, should I not bring it to you who first inspired in me that reverence without which all artistic labour is vain? Others among your pupils will spread your fame far more widely than I can hope to spread it, but none of them, my dear Master, will hold your name in greater reverence or yourself in more lasting affection.

FILSON YOUNG

London, September, 1901.

Music, 20 Jl '26. St.
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Contents

	PAGE
The Pastoral Symphony	1
Tristan and Isolda	15
Bach's Organ Fugues	31
Mozart's Requiem	53
Tschaikowsky's Sixth Symphony	61
The Composer in England	79
Charles Hallé	101
Camille Saint-Saëns	115
An Irish Musician	125
Hector Berlioz	139
Postscript	201

THE PASTORAL SYMPHONY.

> "*. . . . The fair music that all creatures made*
> *To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed*
> *In perfect diapason, whilst they stood*
> *In first obedience, and their state of good.*"

BETWEEN the animal plains and the spiritual peaks of man's nature lies a middle state where he may pause for a moment in his journey from the depth to the height. In those rare snatches of time when he feels his own life to be a harmonic struck from Nature's deepest string, thought and animal sensation alike die in him; but consciousness, which begins to breathe freely in an atmos-

phere stifling to these, becomes wakeful and alert. In the speechless world that we call inanimate Nature, a thousand signals are for ever flying to arrest our attention, and a thousand inarticulate voices question us wistfully. Our danger is that we are so engrossed in the exercise of high faculties that eyes grow dim and ears dull to these minute beckonings. Only when we are at peace with ourselves and our fellows are we likely to heed them; but when at length we watch and listen, a subtle influence begins to draw our steps and thoughts, wooing them to join in this harmonious life; a grassy slope or a bed of moss is the portal at which we knock.

This is Nature's opportunity, when she may take us by the hand and draw us to that drowsy world that is common ground to her and her human children. There we float between sleeping and waking, thinking not at all, but feeling and living vividly.

A thousand tiny beings are at toil under each blade of grass: we seem to see them as they move swiftly about upon their various business, and hear them as they cry to one another of their concerns. Every sense is quickened, and attuned to the great harmony surrounding us. Every pulse is steadied, till all beat in one grand swing against the throbbing heart of Nature down below, where the forces of the world are generated. Our hearts thus thrilling with hers, we reach our highest state: for when we bend to mingle ourselves with earth, we may touch Heaven.

This much Nature can do for a man if he will listen to her, but the number of men who are diligent enough in their attention is small. Hence the great alliance of Nature with the arts, which serve to point and guide men to her. In music, Nature has had no stronger ally than Beethoven; that vivid consciousness, which comes but rarely to

most of us, was his almost constantly; and in like measure as he received from Nature, he gave to us through his art. In this pastoral he gives us more than a glorious composition of music; he creates for and points out to us another entrance to the border-land where Nature meets with us. Think of it: in the concert-room, among crowds of our fellows, wrapped in artificiality and convention, we may see fields and skies; and if we surrender ourselves to the wizard spell we may taste something of a life that is without and beyond the human, synchronised with eternal pulses. Even more than this Beethoven gives us, and herein lies the marvellous art of his achievement. For if you listen to this symphony rendered under perfect conditions, I think you will experience something like this: your consciousness will be cleft in twain, and rise up on each side of the nature-scene; on the one hand, steeped in its glow, deeply partaking in it;

on the other standing apart and regarding the effect upon itself of this immersion in the mother-life. For the moment, your individuality is split; you pluck yourself apart and contemplate your experience from the outside. Mere abstraction is not a marvellous or unusual mental state, when a man withdraws from himself and plays the spy upon his acts; but I think it is both unusual and marvellous when the very life that is examined by its abstracted self is unreal and imaginary, part of the great mesmeric trance into which the music of a master may cast us.

When Beethoven passed long hours in the dark solitude of the pine-woods, his mind, it is certain, absorbed so much of the peace in which such places are steeped that it became healed for a time of its worldly cares and wounds. His Pastoral Symphony is the essence of that profound native contentment, distilled for us into one short hour wherein we may hear the voice of earth:

her sounds of spring, her stream songs, her storm, and her melodious rest; wherein also we may float in the middle state and keep no reckoning of time or trouble.

Allegro ma non troppo.

Over hill and hollow, past sleeping fields, over miles of moorland, the first low sounds of a familiar pipe fall on the ear. Spring is practising his stiff fingers as he blows a few trial notes into his mellow reed; and gradually the disused joints are loosened and the notes form themselves into a melody. Birds and insects, flowers and trees, know well the sound of that pipe, and come forth at the call of Spring, the shepherd. Everywhere as the glad, monotonous sound swells, old Earth stirs herself again; here she has a school of young insects who must be taught their business; there she is decorating a green corner with windflower and crocus; in the depths of this shaded pond, the

starwort at her touch begins to spring, the lily to reach up tiny hands to the sun; and far out on the brimming tide she must re-paint the grey front of some old rock, making the sea-pink bloom again.

And still as the shepherd nears, songs of his penetrate Winter sleep; new life stirs within the old; Earth takes up her plain-song; Time gives the lie to Death. And man, from his enchanted land, sees the first stirrings of sleeping earth, and his own heart stirs to the impulse; the blue eyes of spring look at him from the grass, and his own eyes shine again at the sight; he hears the rush of foaming rivulets, long in the bondage of Winter, leaping down the hillsides to embrace the green earth, and in his own heart rise fountains of grateful love. For while the world was hard and black he seemed to forget the sweetness of the spring air, and the greenness of the green. But here is the old cycle unfolding itself again; and

something within him remembers, and leaps at the memory.

The essence of this movement is a joyful monotony, as of a voice that sings to itself some grateful strain, and sings it again and often. The six and thirty measures that follow bar 150—what are they but the expression of a joy that is as old as earth, and is every year renewed? The fragmentary phrase on which the passage is founded is itself non-expressive; it contains nothing, but stands for an idea. Not until it has been repeated and insisted upon, and sung and hummed many times, does it become pregnant with meaning; and when we catch that, we might wish it to sound for ever in our ears. For there, in that sweet monotony, is the spirit of spring and of life itself: which is without beginning and without end, blossoming out of corruption and springing again where it perishes.

Andante molto mosso.

Spring has deepened into Summer, and the melody of his pipe has died on the perfumed air. Instead, June makes harmony with her choirs of bees and gaudy flies; and the brook that foamed and tumbled merrily, an infant freshet, down the mountain side, now murmurs and quietly talks to itself as it fares through fields of corn and poppy. The busy sounds of creation and re-awakening are heard no more; in this movement, the stream of life is brimming at its flood, and the earth lies hushed in a charmed silence, balanced on the edge of Summer. Through this silence the low song of the brook gradually makes itself heard, and soon it becomes the foreground of the tone-picture. How, in a comparatively few bars of music, we are made sensible of its endless flowing! The simple orchestration gives us all the changing lights on the water; here and there the undertone of the two solo violon-

celli shows up for a moment and is gone, like a shadow under the surface ; now there is an eddy, now a bend in the course, but incessantly the stream is moving, moving, ever so slowly. As we wander along its banks, the child-like song beguiles us into deeper dreaming. The song falls on our outward ear, but its language is alien; we should need the wisdom of children to understand it. But the crystal cleanness of it at least we can understand, and long for something of its happy innocence and full life. We watch it as it passes us on its way to age and knowledge and trouble; we would arrest, if we could, that fateful progress. Earth is wiser; and the brooklet still glides on past the poppies, mingling its quiet tones with the evening calling of birds.

Allegro—Allegro—Allegretto.

It was written long ago that it is not good for man to be alone. Nature shows plainly

that she dislikes her children selfishly to isolate themselves; and man, if he be in sympathy with her, will not seek to cut himself off from his fellows. And the man who in our picture stands for the observant half of a divided consciousness has long been alone; in the quickening woods, amongst the flowers, beside the crooning streamlet. He thinks, perhaps, that here is the life for him: no trouble, no toil; only to listen to the talking branches and the whispering wind. So, when the merry sounds of a peasant party first fall on his ear, his soul dies in him. The rude glee of the yokels jars him to the quick; why are they here, making their infernal din, blots on God's landscape? The loud bassoon sings no jubilee for him, and yonder tart, squalling hautboy that persists in entering just one beat too late is a thing to set a man's nerves jumping. From his dreamy contentment to this acute discomfort is a cold and shocking

plunge. And there is no doubt that this peasant scene is a daringly harsh touch in the symphony. It comes suddenly like a jolt in the smooth and gliding progress, and we start up, rudely shocked, in evil mood. Like most of the daring things that Beethoven did, it is justified in the end, although at the moment its reason is not clear. It is far more than the smooth human touch in a pastoral scene; we have that later; it is too rough and gross to be in harmony with what has gone before. And so the man frets and fumes, offended with nature, and having no kind of desire for the society of his fellows.

But southward over the tossing pine tops the black clouds are piling, and the mutter of distant thunder falls on his ear. The pines begin to moan and sigh; a chariot of clouds comes driving across heaven, the moan changes into a roar; and in a moment, with a great shout, the purple storm falls. It is the sweeping gale of summer after-

noons, that comes with sad songs in the trees and the gold of following sunshine along its edge. The man shrinks back from the smother; in a cleft of the rock he hides, waiting till the storm is past. He hears the shouting of the tree-tops, sees the knife-like slant of the rain, and the rough dart of lightning amid the thunder growl, and he shrinks back from the savage spirit as it rides by, shrilly crying, on the wings of the storm. In a moment he is swept out of himself, his morbid discontent is gone. For if the trickling song of the stream seemed to minister to his mood of isolation, here is the same nature voice shouting loud of action and combat. The tempest rages for a moment; and then, as quickly as it came, it is overpast. The burst of hot sunshine brings rest, and how overpowering is the change! Storm-music and rest-music: it was a contrast that Beethoven loved to express, and must have felt

acutely in his own troubled and stormy life.

And now falls on the hot silence another peasant tune very different from the first. The man no longer shuns the rustics, but joins with them in their happy songs. The strain of violins, which begins at the ninth measure of the *Allegretto*, is, I think, one of the loveliest expressions of serene human happiness in written music. For in that dark moment of storm and stress of weather, the man learned nature's last lesson. Now he reconciles himself and his kind with that vast harmony of created things in which his life, if it be rightly ordered, will bear a part that is at once accordant and independent. The Pastoral Symphony is an overtone of that harmony; a work of art, it is true to Nature, keeping faith with her and with man; it leads us to "that uppermost pinnacle of Wisdom, whence we see that the world is well designed."

TRISTAN AND ISOLDA.

Mir erkoren,
mir verloren,
hehr und heil,
kühn und feig;
Tod geweihtes Haupt!
Tod geweihtes Herz!

NONE of Richard Wagner's compositions has been so much talked and written about as *Tristan and Isolda;* none so extravagantly praised, and none so unreservedly condemned. To those who have at heart the perfect understanding by the world of such a work as this, it is difficult to say which of these two extremes is the more confusing; for sen-

sible people, while they cannot fail to be influenced by the serious condemnation of a dramatic work on apparently high moral grounds, are liable to be no less disgusted and alienated by the extravagant clamour of admiration into which, on a very slight acquaintance with such a work, foolish people are ready to break. I am inclined to say that the second of these attitudes towards a work of art is likely to do it the greater mischief; for it is characteristic of human nature that what it hears condemned, it will be inclined to justify, and things that it hears loudly trumpeted, it will seek an occasion to discredit. While honest enemies are not to be feared, dishonest friends will quickly bring a cause to confusion; and it is lamentable fact that many of those who most boldly profess themselves to be admirers of *Tristan and Isolda* may aptly be styled dishonest. While they are listening to its performance, they are caught up to a seventh heaven of

delight; but afterwards they begin to talk in a mysterious way, hinting at "wild orgies of passion," at a "glorification of sensuality," and such like mischievous nonsense; wagging their heads, as who should say: "He is a sad fellow, this Wagner; all very beautiful and wonderful, but between ourselves, shockingly wicked, you know." Friendly to Wagner and his work these imagine themselves to be; but I have no kind of doubt that they are the friends upon whom the master cried out, that he desired to be delivered from them. If a man can honestly say that he finds in the drama of *Tristan and Isolda* any taint of the kind that I have suggested, it proves that he has not only missed its whole spirit and intention, but has read into it things which it does not contain. Here is a story from the old world; it tells of betrothal and betrayal; of the deep elemental love that many waters cannot quench nor the floods drown; of honour

that was found of less account than love; of death that was chosen rather than shame. It is as clean and wholesome as nature; and its theme, which some of us would degrade, is by Wagner idealised and cut clear of every gross accretion. Though none is taught, we may learn a hundred noble lessons from it; to my knowledge, not one that is ignoble.

If I blame some enthusiasts for the way in which they speak and write about *Tristan and Isolda*, I would not have it thought that I attack anyone because of his enthusiasm, or because that enthusiasm is founded on reasons different from my own. On the contrary, no one can have a greater affection for this drama than I, or a profounder regard for the transcendent genius which it displays. And I have certainly no desire to be ranked with those who accept Wagner "with reservations," or "are prepared to go a little way" in acknowledging his supremacy in

the double art of music-drama. But even honest enthusiasts may do their own cause an injury by an over-readiness to uphold and celebrate it without knowing why they do so: a man's naked conviction, which may be sufficient guide for his own conduct, is no very convincing proof to another man that he should act or think in a like manner. If then, in writing about *Tristan and Isolda* I adventure myself upon a sea in which many who have been better equipped than I have gone adrift, it is because I wish to reassure those who are not acquainted with this drama (and there are many cultivated people who are not) upon a point as to which they may well have some misgivings: and that is, that in *Tristan and Isolda* a plain story is told, and not an ethical problem discussed. Than the story itself nothing could be simpler; and in the whole drama, as I understand it, there is no attempt to give expression to any particular view or to

preach any particular ethical gospel. There is, moreover, no elaborate complexion of the musical web such as would render difficult its appreciation by a mind technically uninformed; or rather there is great complexity in the construction, and a marvellous ingenuity in the subordination of every musical device to the end in view; but so perfect is the command over material and so masterly the grip of a thousand component elements, that, in the result, the building rises clear and simple in outline, with no trace of the labyrinth of scaffolding that was used in its erection. That is a great work of art which, when it is understood, appeals to all conditions of mankind; that which only appeals to people educated in the technical elements of its construction cannot be so described. And therefore Wagner, when he sought a mainspring for one of his dramas, dug deep down into the heart of the world, and used one or other of the vast

elemental forces which dwell there, not for to-day or to-morrow alone, but for all time.

> **" Doch möcht'er den Ring sich errathen,**
> **Der macht' ihn zum Walter der Welt ! "**

So sang the bird to Siegfried in the sunlit forest, when the taste of the dragon's blood had quickened his ear to know the language of fowls. Like the magic Ring, Wagner's genius has procured for him the thing he most desired ; through it, he may even be said to have won the " ward of the world."

In this drama Wagner has taken the story of Tristram and Ysoude, and, greatly simplifying it, transformed it into a dramatic episode with three acute moments. The stage action is little more than a skeleton outline of the story ; all the rest—colour, emotion and psychological development—is contained in the music. The stage is used for presenting what are practically three

great tableaux. The first is on the deck of a ship in which Tristan is carrying away Isolde as a bride for his Cornish King. Isolda, who is deeply in love with Tristan, cannot bear the thought of her fate; and together they drink what they imagine to be a poisonous draught, but find to have been changed by Isolda's servant for a love-potion. This is the first acute moment in the drama, when they recognise the tremendous consequences of their act. In the second tableau, Isolda calls Tristan to her side in King Mark's absence; and through the short summer night, embowered in a garden of flowers, they give expression to their passionate love. Here they are betrayed by Melot and surprised by King Mark; and Tristan, since death is all he can wish for, allows himself to be wounded in a duel with Melot. In the next tableau we see him in the courtyard of his castle in Brittany, dying of his wound; and before

the sad Autumn afternoon has faded he is dead, and Isolda, who comes too late to save him, dies on his breast a few minutes after King Mark has arrived to renounce his own claims and unite the lovers.

That is the simple story of Wagner's drama; the music that accompanies it fills it to the brim with emotion and passion. The real drama lies in the music, which is elastic, and can adapt itself to the individual need of a thousand listeners; beside it the most consummate acting seems wooden and arbitrary, too limited in its expression to set forth one half of the emotions aroused by the dramatic situations. As for the inner story, the story of the heart and soul which such a drama as this must contain, it lies far behind the run of outward events, and does not depend merely on the actions of the persons as we see them on the stage. The real Tristan and Isolda are not before us on the stage, but in our own

imagination, called into being by the music, connected with it by the symbolic stage-play. It is this that makes the music of *Tristan and Isolda* so great an achievement in dramatic art: persons, actions and scenes are contained in it; but in addition, it suggests the thoughts and emotions of the persons, supplies the springs of action, and invests the scenes with life. As I have said, the stage performance is not so much a dramatic narrative as a series of tableaux to help and direct the mind to the real moments of the drama. So, when we see the figure of Tristan, we at once begin to live his inward life, and he lives vividly in us; when the cup is raised and the potion drained before our outward eyes, we feel the cold glooms of ending and death creeping round our hearts; and when the garden lies before us steeped in the glow of a summer night, the shifting shadows on the grass, the restless stirring

of the trees, and the distant voice of a bird calling up the dawn all fill us with a vague, foreboding sense of Time going by with pattering footsteps, of sweet moments flashing past, of all things rushing on to an appointed end.

In each act of the drama, we find two strongly contrasted atmospheres; one of these seems to represent the outside world that wags unconsciously on through the most acute crises in the lives of the two chief actors, and the other, the psychological environment of the personal tragedy. Isolda may rage and storm at her faithless knight; his heart may be consuming itself with an emotion he must not discover; but all the while the ship-folk go about their business on the deck, singing their rude and briny song, hauling warps and coiling ropes. In the second act the contrast is still more acute. On the flowery bank sit the lovers, heedless of flying minutes, mur-

muring their ecstatic antiphon; but one by one the stars are fading, the night breezes dying, and behind them the east is blushing with a dawn that is to bring shame and death. And in the third act, poor Tristan lies in his ruined courtyard awaiting Isolda and death; but in his semi-delirium he lives through the hours of bliss that are fled, and forgets his present pain.

Not the least wonderful quality in this music is its power to illuminate the atmosphere in which the action is enshrined. Far more than on the stage, the scenery is in the music. The song of the sailors in the first act paints running billows and a seething wake, the salt sea wind and flying foam; and during the real happenings of the drama, we retain an under-consciousness of the following surge in the water that reminds us of unresting progress towards some dim destiny. In the second act the atmosphere is still more contained in

the music. When the sound of horns trembles on the still night air, now louder, now more distant, it fills the stage in some mysterious way with the atmosphere of a summer night. The cadence at the end of the fanfare touches the sound and the scene with infinite sadness; like everything in this act except the songs of the lovers, it speaks in solemn tones of warning. Presently it dies, even the lingering echo is lost; and through the drip and whisper of a fountain the deep silence is felt only more deeply. There is a theme which haunts this scene like the voice of Time:

In the incomparable duet of love, that stream of melody on which the dark hours

are borne away, it ebbs and flows, sad emblem of a sense that shadows all earthly delight: of the briefness of deep joy, of things too sweet to last, of Time flying, flying, flying past the Elysian spot where we shelter for a moment. The tragedy of Tristan and Isolda is surely here, in this brief hour snatched by them from hurrying Destiny. We who are watching can read the signs of the passing night, and, dismayed, mark the coming of dawn and death; but they are folded deep in the unconsciousness of bliss, and take no heed of the fateful signals. How we long to tell them, to awake in them a knowledge of their danger! When Fate strikes at them in the grey morning light, how sickening is the blow, and how miserable the picture of Love and Trust, Friendship and Honour, all standing betrayed! It is not one to be dwelt upon, even in a mere record of impressions such as this is; but in the

drama, inevitable as it is, it prepares us for the last sad scenes, and, in part, renders the heart numb to the emotion of mere grief. *Mir Verloren!* Lost to me!

The atmosphere of the last act, like that of the first and second, is early determined by the music itself. The haunting strains of the rustic's pipe diffuse an autumnal air over the castle precincts, and harmonize with the withered hopes of Tristan, as he lies dying in his ruined court-yard where the ivy sprawls at will over window and doorway. Out on the cliff where the piper spins his web of sad melody the corn is standing ripe for the sickle; and so the harvest of grief sown by Tristan and Isolda in obedience to some obscure law of nature stands waiting to be garnered. In these last moments, although Tristan is the more prominently in our view, it is Isolda who occupies our thoughts; Tristan has our sympathy, but our love and grief are

chiefly for her. When the last shocks of harvest have been gathered, and Isolda sinks on Tristan's lifeless body, she at once begins to fall into the strange melody-haunted dream from which she is not to awake on this side of Time. A little while before the end the marvellous orchestral sea on which her voice floats begins to heave and break on the beginning of each bar. While all else fades, enveloped in the gathering glooms of night, this mysterious commotion increases; cannonades of unearthly thunder assault the rhythm, and break in a flying melody of sweet and heavenly sounds; like waves that foam on a sundering bar the solemn harmonies enfold her voice and hide it from us; and long before its last faint, rapturous tone falls on our ear, she is far forth on that flood

> "Along whose shore the numerous footfalls cease,
> The voices and the tears of life expire. . . . . .
> There Blame desists, there his unfaltering dogs
> He from the chase recalls, and homeward rides;
> Yet Praise and Love pass over and go in."

BACH'S ORGAN FUGUES.

They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here.

A GREAT dim figure, standing at the threshold of the German renascence —Bach is little more than this to the world of to-day. He is, indeed, one to whom popularity seems likely always to be denied. In his lifetime, although a part of his rare genius was undoubtedly recognised, great artists were never fashionable heroes; after his death he was practically forgotten for half a century; even now, although Mendelssohn and Samuel Wesley have revealed

him to all serious students of music, to the throng his art is uncongenial and himself unknown. Too great, too earnest, too solemn even for his own simple age, he is infinitely too great and earnest and solemn for a world that, if it does not desire to banish seriousness, shows an increasing tendency to organise public life on a system of departments wherein the citizen may purchase the fruits of genius as at a warehouse, and himself remain unleavened by the great human influence of contact with master minds. We need not regret on Bach's behalf that he is not fashionable. It is not his posthumous office to reform the music of the fashionable at home, or of the theatre, or even of the church; his influence was upon the roots of the art and there it has been working and will always work, an inspiration to every artist who follows him. He has come into his own kingdom, but it is a quiet kingdom where

he receives love instead of acclamations and reverence instead of applause. I think it is an immortality such as he would have loved; it is so safe, so quiet, so abiding, so rich in worthy fruits, in its simplicity so intimate with the good old man who prepared it.

But on our own behalf we may admit some regrets that Bach's place in modern art is not more conspicuous. The kind of earnestness that he had is just what we most greatly need to-day; if we could but surround ourselves with his atmosphere and steep ourselves in his spirit we should find in them the antidote to much that is degrading in present tendencies. What a pattern his life was, what a picture it gives us of the complete artist! I know of nothing more touching than the contrast between the man's huge genius and austere ideals, and his simple plan of life and homely ways. See him at his Thuringian home in Eisenach under the shadow of the Wartburg, sur-

rounded by an atmosphere of musical family tradition, and learning his first instrument under his father; at Ohrdruf, with his brother, Johann Christoph, spending the days in study of Latin, New Testament Greek, arithmetic, rhetoric and theology, and the long moonlight nights in transcribing the precious, forbidden manuscripts. See him at Lüneburg at the convent school of Saint Michael, singing first in the choir and then, when his voice broke, playing in the band through the streets and in church; and in spite of these occupations finding time to spend many hours of the day and night in practising and developing his fingers at the clavichord or *cembalo*. Think of him tramping backwards and forwards the twenty-five miles between Lüneburg and Hamburg and the forty-five miles between Lüneburg and Celle, so that he should have opportunities of hearing the new French dance music and the organists famous in his small

corner of the world; think of him tramping the two hundred miles between Arnstadt and Lübeck in order to hear Buxtehude, and quarrelling with the Consistory on the head of the long absence which he had made for the sole purpose of improving himself; thereafter carting his small effects to Mühlhausen where he worked so steadily to improve the music of the Lutheran church. See him at Weimar and Cöthen, a court official now, but still studying and improving himself, and ever seeking to widen his knowledge and attainments; and finally at Leipsic, carrying on through all sorts of difficulties his work as Cantor faithfully, earnestly, and, on the whole, happily, pouring forth for twenty-seven years his marvellous, immortal music. A good father and master, living for his children and his pupils, content to live and enjoy his home life and work rather than anxious to enrich himself by exhibiting his powers to a wider world; worried and

harassed in his old age by Jacks in office, yet even to the last applying himself to his labours with passionate diligence, finding the days too short for his industry and often working throughout the night as he came nearer to that other and longer night in which no man can work. Picturing him thus, one is able to realise something of the simplicity and seriousness of the life in which his great genius was nourished and developed.

As painting, alone of the arts, flourished in Flanders and Holland in the seventeenth century, and poetry in England in the sixteenth, so music flourished alone in Germany in the eighteenth century. Coming directly from the church, its germ in the plain song and chorale of the Reformation, it found its chief exponents in the organists and church musicians who alone had opportunities for presenting choral and instrumental works on any extended scale. Bach was the fine flower of these, a perfectly natural product

of his time and circumstances; simply an organist of the church—the church, however, which was the centre and fountain head of the whole social and civic life of the time. And although he was a brilliant performer on many instruments, the organ was really Bach's instrument; its peculiar, inflexible, but infinitely grand and solemn genius was alone capable of giving full expression to his art; and the compositions written for it are his only works of which the form has not grown antiquated and out of date. And thus, by a long stage, we arrive at the organ fugues.

Bach took the musical form that lay nearest to his hand. Where music was so large a part of the life of an intellectual people it was inevitable that it should find expression in forms agreeable to the occupation and entertainment of the intellect; and the fugue, founded on principles of logic and rhetoric, was obviously the suitable vehicle.

Bach found it little more than a mathematical problem, a dry framework to be decorated with the principles of thorough-bass; he raised it to a living power, sympathetic, capable of infinite expansion, an instrument meet for all the utterances of the composer, a structure so complex, so symmetrical and on so large a scale as to conform to the principles of architecture rather than of mere design. And here we are upon one great and essential difference between Bach's work and that of almost any other composer. The proportion and symmetry of his compositions depends on far more than beauty of outline. In his organ fugues and greater choruses he is working with masses of tone; indeed I know of no other music in which the ideas are on so grand a scale. The fearlessness with which he would open one of his organ works with a long passage of single notes, utterly uninteresting in themselves, but bearing an

essential part in the architectural scheme of the whole, is astounding. There are whole passages of twenty or thirty bars in a score of Bach's organ works that, played alone, are meaningless, dissonant, and even ugly; but when one hears them in their proper place they fall into the line, perhaps of some vast harmonic scheme, perhaps of some sweeping curve of melodic sequence. He will repeat for half-a-dozen bars the same pattern of notes without a change; repeat them again for another six bars with one of the notes sharpened; repeat them again with another note flattened; and so on until he has modulated to another key with an exquisite harmonic effect akin to that of colours dissolving upon a screen. He was never content to make his modulations like nails connecting two pieces of wood; his work must show no joinings or transitions; it must be all of one fabric, its component parts grafted rather than fastened together.

And if in modulation his cunning was supreme, it was not less so in his treatment of the sequential passages which are so characteristic of his work. Where nine composers out of ten would construct a sequence out of a pattern of notes, Bach often constructed his on a pattern of extended harmonies; so that the sequence never becomes tiresome or obvious, but is always surprising. In the midst of a fugue a sudden blush of tone colour will appear and fade; in a little while it will be, as it were, answered by another flash of a different hue of harmony; a few bars further on the myriad notes of the fabric will glow again with something that reminds us of the first colour and yet seems to demand a balance, which duly appears in its turn. While this has been going on one has hardly noticed the arabesque outline of the melody; but although one does not remember it the ear took note of it; and presently the attention

is arrested by a formation of the outline that although unremembered seems familiar. And once more the harmony mantles to a warmer hue, utterly different from the first one that we notieed, but yet inevitably answering to it in some sort of way; the former procession of colours is, as it were, echoed; and as the long melodic outline unfolds itself, the ear is surprised and charmed by a reminiscence of something heard before. It is this art that welds a composition of Bach's into one compact and symmetrical structure of nobility; whatever changes the development of the fugue may be undergoing, the minute pattern of its fabric is wrought upon with a much larger and simpler pattern of structure which encloses and reconciles the contrasts of detail; the artificer is at work beside the artist; the architect waits upon the builder, and the fugue becomes a work of fine art.

In the whole range of written music there

is nothing more modern than these old fugues. Bach has had many imitators, but he has had no followers on his own line, although every modern composer has learnt something from him. And yet, in England at any rate, his spirit does not at all enter into the performances of the men of his own craft—the church organists. They study his works, indeed, but only as exercises by the aid of which they may give the more fluent expression to the modern travesties of organ music. They spend a certain number of hours in practising, let us say, the A minor fugue, so that they may have greater confidence in playing the flamboyant works of Mr. Clarkson Scott. And there, with the greater part of them, the matter ends: no study of Bach's matchless part writing, no attempt to imitate his principles of the smooth-flowing diatonic progressions that are so suitable with the organ's sober utterance.

It is melancholy; but since Bach has had his effect in developing the technical abilities of English organ-players we may still hope that he will educate the æsthetic taste that at present lags so far behind their physical attainments. If that should ever happen it will usher in a renascence of musical art in England. Without the influence of Bach we shall never see such a renascence, and until the musical taste of organists is born again we can never feel the influence of Bach widely.

Amongst the organ music left to us by him about twelve of the Preludes and Fugues are pre-eminent by reason of their grandeur, their nobility, their perfection. Of these twelve, three rise above their imposing neighbours in towering magnificence, each perfect in form, each exhaustive in its expression of some particular aspect of the master's life, all overwhelming in the impression which they convey of things created to

stand full in the tideway of Time with faces set bluff to his instant assaults. The G minor, the A minor and the E flat preludes and fugues seem to me to contain the essence of Bach's art; and inasmuch as that art has for a century cradled the genius of every composer whose work has lived, so in these three works we may find the genesis of every idiom, every turn of expression that goes to make up the musical currency of our time. The marvel is great when we remember that the fugue form, stiff, powdered and bewigged of aspect, was the most expressive vehicle at Bach's command; for though the dress is old-fashioned, the feelings and ideas that it clothes are strangely modern. Yet it is a little misleading to speak of feelings and ideas in connection with these works. They are no conscious record of certain states of mind, nor can I believe that they were conceived and uttered as narrative of any mental or emotional

happenings. But if we may be sure of anything, it is that in Bach's music we have the direct expression of the man himself, absolutely simple, wholly true. Its unconsciousness is part of its enthralling charm.

In the G minor prelude and fugue we have the simplest expression of Bach's character. Gladly he calls to us from sunny uplands; gaily sounds his shepherd pipe as he breathes into it this song of earth; but as it falls from his sun-bathed heights towards the valley through which we fare, the joyful cadence becomes tinged with a strange sadness. It leaves him burdened with the joy of life; it reaches us weighted with a pain that is neither of life nor of death. Bach was a simple man, and he could invest his song of earth with the inimitable dignity of simple things. We are conscious of the dignity, but along with it we must be ever conscious of that vague sense of the unattainable without which few

honest men may regard things that are both simple and true. It is some such feeling as this that, for me at any rate, always darkens the foreground of this mighty tone picture. The sum of an artistic impression is made up, partly of the intention of the artist who executes, and partly of the receptive action in the spectator or listener; and here the listener casts the shadows in the foreground, and Bach's bright light floods the horizon. At any rate it is well to think so; for by perfect understanding, in so far as the thing is attainable, the foreground glooms may some day be dispersed. In the prelude, which is directly solemn and even gloomy, this secondary emotion roused by the fugue is forecast; and what the exuberant fugue subject conveys to us when in the course of development it has become shadowed, the opening strains of the prelude, charged with lofty melancholy, paraphrase in a more familiar voice.

In the A minor prelude and fugue the manner is much more personal and intimate. Clouds have swept across the upland slope; the sound of the pipe is tender and plaintive, but ah, how familiar! For this is Bach's song of love, the life-filling emotion that is common to us all, in which none stands on higher ground than other, without which a man can drink deeply of neither joy nor sorrow. In the long passionate opening, splendid with chromatic hues, every note contains an appeal. The shepherd's plaintive strain in *Tristan and Isolda* is an echo of this opening passage; but the one expresses an individual, the other a universal emotion. Throughout this whole work the same unbroken contact is preserved and I know of no other among Bach's works through the medium of which one may come so near the man himself. Through this, a through the G minor fugue, sounds the same low hum of melancholy; throughout its tire-

less movement prevails the same unrest; but in this case the undertone is not imparted by the sundering æther, but rather communicated in the thrilling union of a close hand-clasp. This undertone, this elusive element that is almost a weakness, gives a painfully pathetic tone to the music. I have found it in no other work of Bach's, but I cannot listen to this without being conscious of it. In the long, falling cadences it sadly rings, a half-uttered protest against the passing of precious moments, a half-formed desire to arrest the fateful flowing of the measures. A weakness we may call it, but it completes the humanness of this work; a flaw it may be, but it indicates the beating of a familiar pulse.

A man's religion is of all things the most personal part of him, the least to be communicated, the last to be shared. So in the E flat fugue, although we discern the innermost shrine of Bach's personality, we may

not enter it, but regard it from afar. Here the whole atmosphere is changed. The upland slope, in sun or gloom, has vanished, the shepherd's pipe is laid aside, and the separating gulf has been infinitely extended. From a thick cloud, from the sure stronghold of a simple and austere faith, the voice rings down to us in pure and exalted trumpet tones. The grand choral subject that falls at its cadence into a smother of counterpoint is typical of things that are changeless and unending; like the rugged Lutheran faith the spirit of which it so perfectly expresses its aspect is stern and its dignity unassailable; when its message is plainly delivered, then it plunges gladly into the fray. Through bewildering counterpoints it wends an undeviating way; opposed by the ceaseless flowing of a full tide, it preserves a sturdy and unalterable purpose; and when at length it arrives at the goal the opposing currents have been turned into following seas

that break round it in thunders of triumph. The work is a net of contrasts. Of the three subjects, one treads majestically, another flows smoothly, and the third leaps light-heartedly. Of the three sections, one is a long five-fold melody, another is a skeleton framework of polyphony, and the third is a whirl of suspended harmonies. And the greatest contrast of all lies between the surpassing technical mastery, the stupendous cunning shown in physical construction, and the absolute simplicity of the spiritual attitude that is expressed. All the elaborate contrapuntal devices and astonishing contrasts are resolved and blended in a master's crucible, and the result is marvellous in its sublime unity. The faith that blazes out from this work in dazzling radiance runs like a thread of gold throughout Bach's art, and though we must turn our eyes from a beam so blinding, yet in the divine optimism, the element through

which it reaches us, we may breathe a new and worthy life.

These three works have stood firm during periods when musical art has been shaken to its deepest foundation. On their old-world faces, as they front the flowing tide of development, we may discern sympathy with all that is good in the new work. I have singled them out because in them are enshrined the principles of earnestness, dignity and artistic courage that are at the root of all Bach's work. Earnestness—any study of Bach must set out from and return to that idea; it is the one test for stability in genius.

MOZART'S REQUIEM.

The morning drum-call on my eager ear
Thrills unforgotten yet; the morning dew
Lies yet undried along my field of noon.

But now I pause at whiles in what I do,
And count the bell, and tremble lest I hear
(My work untrimmed) the sunset gun too soon.

THE things that a man says or does when he is instantly expecting the signal of Death often borrow a vivid significance from the lurid light that beats upon them. Yet a little while, and the man is here, to mould and fashion his fluent affairs, to care for his work and attend to his business; again a little while, and

he is gone; the metal in the mould runs cold on the instant, his little group of concerns crystalises, and the attitudes are perpetuated in which the moment of extinction found them. These circumstances, tragic or commonplace according to the mood in which we regard them, surrounded the composition of most of Mozart's *Requiem Mass;* he was writing, as we say, against time; and although the work bears no trace of those finishing touches with which upon mature reflection he loved to adorn his masterpieces this Mass remains to us as one of the very greatest examples of his art. It is, in addition, a priceless complement to that biography of his mind which his music supplies, for it gives us a glimpse of his spiritual bearing in a great and solemn crisis.

If we study the requiems that composers of note have written when their own death was not an immediate probability we find that in nearly every case the image sug-

gested is that of a person to whom something tragic is happening; the man himself is the central object around whom revolve a number of circumstances, more or less affecting; his emotions, and his attitude towards his approaching end are the things most clearly expressed. This treatment of the subject is natural enough to a man looking far forward towards a misty drama in which his future self is the chief actor; he is filled with pity for that unfortunate person; at once the note of grief is struck, and at once the chance of a truthful point of view is gone. Henceforward the tone is one of sorrow and anguish; the wells of the heart are plumbed to find expression for the terrible chaunt of *Dies Iræ;* the living are forgotten, and the dead stands alone amid overwhelming mysteries. Small wonder, when an artist sets himself to consider such a scene, that he should either lose himself in the terrible picturesqueness of the

thing, and so set his imagination to work upon it, or else, worse still, allow himself to sentimentalise over a solemnity so unspeakable. The truth is, that not one man in ten thousand is equal to the serious accomplishment of this task; to my knowledge, only Johannes Brahms has achieved it successfully.

Mozart, however, was in a very different case when he came to write his *Requiem*. Here was a last piece of work to be done, and a last wage to be earned; the subject of the work was one that in any case must have filled his thoughts in such a sickness as seized upon him; and he set himself to accomplish it with his whole being. This was no playing with a distant futurity, but an earnest record of instant and vivid circumstance. Caught in the toils of Death, he could at least look round him and once more paint things as he saw them; and the things that he saw, the great and kindly

truths that he expressed, set this *Requiem* of his beyond all price for us. Unlike the dreamers in mid-life he did not see himself as the chief figure in this affair; and so in his work we cannot find one note of selfish grief or unseemly self-pity. From the very first bar, with its cool and nerve-steadying voice, soothing as the handgrip of a faithful friend, down to the end, there is no room for a selfish or hysterical thought in the hearer. Often, to be sure, the music, pursuing some exalted measure, rolls far above his head like distant thunder; anon it bursts upon his ear in strains that crush and overwhelm him; here he is uplifted, and there cast down by its magnificence; but it is never his own griefs that weigh upon him, but rather the infinite smallness of himself and his concerns at the latter end: the seriousness of life rather than the bitterness of death. The strenuous flood of sound on which the opening *Requiem* and *Kyrie* are borne carries one

clean away from the contemplation of finality; one recognises plainly and without dismay that fact which sometimes seems so shocking: that the round world will roll steadily on even after you and I, who to ourselves are the centre of it all, have gone, and never be a penny the worse.

Even in the *Tuba Mirum*, where most composers have given rein to their imagination, Mozart is solemnly and terribly matter-of-fact. Berlioz, all his dramatic instincts afire, relying wholly on his imagination for his emotions, laboured for realism at this point, and tore the air with trumpet cries. That was not good art, and it fails even of the end for which he strove; the terror it inspires is purely physical, and not to be compared with the reality of Mozart's music. This is the only dreadful part of the mass; and even here the terror is not for ourselves; but the heart is purged with a great pity for those trembling penitents whose voices

we hear at the judgment bar. The bitter cry:

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,
Quem patronem rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus!

and the solo passage—accents of despair from voices well-nigh paralysed by dread, are shocking in their intensity.

But the glad solemnity of *Rex tremendæ* and the trusting simplicity of *Recordare, Jesu pie* heal and soothe the heart anew; the wrath is past; and from this point to the end the music flows on with a kind of lofty gladness, strenuous and austere as a mountain wind, but charged like it with health and vigour. The Mass for the Dead, this office is named by Catholic use; but Mozart has turned it into a benediction for the living. Only in one place, in the *Lacrymosa*, is there a direct appeal for our tears; but here, strangely enough, the hymn changes from the first person to the third. The tender and human pity in the music is perfectly

natural; the rhythmic wail that runs through it is wrung from our very hearts by the contemplation of the woeful scene.

It matters little to me whether it was Mozart's or Süssmayer's hand that actually wrote down the latter part of this mass; I am convinced that the substance is all Mozart. We may regard it as a precious jewel wrung from the very hands of Death and a monument of his impotence utterly to destroy his victims. Of all Mozart's work it has the most likely hold on the interests of future generations; partly because it is beautiful music, and partly because it is a valuable human document, existing almost alone as a curious commentary on a predicament in which we must all be placed.

TCHAIKOVSKY'S SIXTH SYMPHONY.

De Profundis Clamavi.

THERE is a view of human life from which philsophy and religion are alike excluded; it embraces none but the individual, it assigns no place to him in the balanced order of nature, and it only reveals him as the centre of a web spun by an unknown hand. That view, in which, although foredoomed to defeat, he is entered in the lists with Time for such prizes as may seem to him best worth gaining, vanishes in a

gloomy perspective at the point of death. In its dark vista the most simple and inevitable of human affairs take on the colour of tragedy; misfortune appears as an irremediable evil, joy itself as a fleeting and elusive shadow. It is well to remember this when we think of Tchaïkovsky's Pathetic Symphony; for here, as I understand it, is a piece of music which reflects the images of a mind prisoned in the house of Fear, and looking forth on the world through a window darkened by heavy despair. Everything in the symphony is tinged with a sombre hue; even gladness drags heavy footed, smiling through tears. One writes the words "fear" and "despair" glibly enough, but it is hard to realize what they mean to one in whose soul hope never sprang, who never tasted the consolations of friendship, who had not even that flickering uncertainty of a life beyond the present that buoys up so many who profess no belief in it. And it is the

mind of such an one that is set forth on this great Pagan canvas. I cannot think of any work of art in which the curtains that shroud a human heart are so far plucked back. I can remember no piece of music which so poignantly expresses all the shades of feeling to which one transcendant emotion gives birth. The only thing to be likened to it is Wagner's *Tristan and Isolda*, a work of infinitely greater magnitude; but that is a study in what might be called a lyrical emotion; it catches floating clouds of feeling, and colours them for us with its rainbow beams; while this plumbs sunless depths, and reveals the secrets of a thick darkness. And, when we come to the root of the matter, music is at its best when it is expressing what can be expressed by no other means. The lights and shades of human love have been well expressed in words; there are languages that might have been made for their expression. Ay, and Wagner has

gone far beyond words in *Tristan*, only his musical art is supplemented by language and picture. But where are the words that can even faintly convey what is expressed in this Symphony? The most skilful arrangement of words, the most ingenious combination of colours, the most subtle dramatic composition, are all alike far too clumsy and superficial for the purpose. The smiling happiness of a pastoral each can represent; words may paint the joy of life, and some of its grief; the painter's brush may show us a smiling landscape; in the drama at its best we may spy upon the mind as it goes about its business. But music can lead us farthest into the fields of grief; only when she guides us can the dark flowers that blow there yield us their most secret essence.

To appreciate this music it is necessary to understand the character of its emotion. There is a grief, the child of a

poor heart, nursed and cherished as a precious possession, and used as a signal to attract sympathy and condolence: with such grief we have nothing to do here. There is also the grief that lodges for a time in every stout heart but has no freehold there; its darkness is gilded with the rays of hope; where it makes its sojourn it adorns the dwelling-place. With that also we have no concern. Here the clouds have no bright lining. Some people, it is true, profess to find in this symphony an expression of lofty hope that makes battle with despair; but for my part I cannot see it. There is a temptation to erect moral finger posts in a work of this kind; to be over ready to hoist a lantern in the darkness, and to surmount the cross with a crown. That may be an easy way to point morals to our friends or to teach them lessons we have not learned ourselves; but a great work of art is not labelled in this way with its gospel. That is

written, for every one who searches diligently, in a tongue none but himself can understand. There is no hope, no optimism here at all, nor (so far as I can see) any aspiration to hope; there is rather that which deceives the heart into hope and beguiles the soul into momentary happiness; and with these there is a black shadow which ever flits beside the wayfarer to cheat him of the brief illusion. For me, this is no history of a man's soul, Pagan or Christian. It does not even appear now, as once it did, a picture of human life from the cradle to the grave; but rather as a series of musical expressions, widely various as to their themes, but all bound together by the basis of a common point of view, as alien harmonies are reconciled upon a pedal note. The frescoes with which Ford Madox Brown has decorated the Town Hall in Manchester will serve to illustrate my meaning. One panel differs widely from another in subject and style; Dalton sits by

a green pool collecting marsh-fire gas opposite to the spot where a band of Roman masons is at work on the windy heights of a fort; swords and spears are clashing in deadly combat beside King Edwin of Northumberland as he receives the rite of Baptism ; but all the frescoes are stamped with one man's individuality; they set forth his own point of view and form one great decorative scheme.

So this symphony contains many kinds of music: music in an elementary form, such as the two chief themes of the second movement, and music in its highest development which expresses by a few notes and rests the subtlest emotions. In some parts of the work, the style is simple and almost crude; in others it is polished and elaborate; here the picture is painted in bold strokes, and there set forth with the minutest detail. But irreconciliable as much of it is with any structural scheme, every bar is subordinate to a psychological scheme,

and stands in a certain relationship to the central idea to which I have referred. And as to one standing on a high tower and regarding men who walk far beneath him, all seem to be of the same size, the same build, the same complexion; so the ordinary affairs of life, as they appear to one who looks upward from a desperate gulf, are all of the same tragic colour.

In the opening bars, the key to the whole is placed in our hands. Listen, and sink out of the sunlight, down through the gloom of those sombre strains until you stand, alone, in a valley filled with whispering shadows. This is a deeper cleft than the valley of Humiliation; it is not green nor beautiful with lillies; there are no pearls here, nor words of life. Far above you, a panorama will presently be unrolled, and from the depths of this prison-house you may watch it, seeing the incidents of its progress through the mists of a dark environment. Fix

firmly in your mind the keynote of gloom which hums like an organ-point far below the music's most feverish and most beautiful measures; for every phrase and sentence of the symphony must have this dull grief for its commentary.

II.

A wild and bewildering haste; one tragic event treading on the heels of another; cries of grief wrung from the heart, now hysterical, now sad and passionate; and finally a benumbed resignation to suffering —these are the impressions of the first movement on my mind. The thing bursts suddenly upon you after the slumbrous lament of the introduction, and in the very first subject, the tearing of the strings, followed by the chill chattering of the upper wind, strikes dismay into the heart. There is press and hurry, but it is all outside you; if you were in the bustle it would not be half so bad; there you stand while this com-

motion of terror boils round you. Surely it expresses what Christian felt in the midst of that very dangerous Quag: "He heard doleful voices, and rushings to and fro, so that sometimes he thought he should be torn to pieces, or trodden down like mire in the Streets. This frightful sight was seen, and these dreadful noises were heard by him for several miles together, and coming to a place where he thought he heard a company of *Fiends* coming forward to meet him, he stopt, and began to muse what he had best to do. Sometimes he had half a thought to go back, then again he thought he might be half way through the Valley; he remembered also how he had already vanquished many a danger, and that the danger of going back might be much more than to go forward, so he resolved to go on. Yet the *Fiends* seemed to come nearer and nearer. . . . Also now he saw Hobgoblins, and

Satyrs, and Dragons of the Pit. . . . They were discovered to him, according to that which is written, *He discovereth deep things out of darkness and bringeth out to light the Shadow of Death.*" The music is not to be translated into words, but these suggest it much better than any sentences I could put together. After this tragic bustle comes the less terrible, more tearful second subject (*Andante*) : and the supplemental theme with its sweetly running flute and bassoon duet, is more sane still ; it is like a flowering patch of happiness watered by tears of former grief. But even on it is cast the shadow of foreboding which robs it of its delight. Amid any other surroundings the theme would suggest simple and unalloyed happiness ; here it is like a glimpse into some Paradise which we may not enter, and the memory of it embitters the strife which so soon bursts out again with a thunder-clap. The rushing passages of the

fugato suggest work undertaken for the sake of its benumbing influence on the mind; "anything rather than have time to think," says the man who invents tasks for himself; and here is a great deal of contrapuntal business evolved out of nothing at all. Perhaps the end is attained, for in the trumpet theme to which the counterpoint gives place there is an unreal calmness. That in its turn soon breaks down, and once more the mood is one of gloomy dignity, melting more and more towards the end; the bitter clouds break into tears, a fountain rises in the stony heart, and grief sighs itself into forgetfulness, as a child falls asleep weeping.

III.

There is a morning after every night of anguish, when a man must rise and face the dreary day. Most people know what it is to look forth after some night of heavy trouble, and see with a kind of amazement, that a new day is breaking, that birds are beginning

to chirp in the thickets, that husbandmen are setting out to their work. The opening of the second movement, fresh with a morning melody, suggests such an awakening; Nature has not been arrested in her courses; still the sun can rise, the tide ebb, and the wind sing in the grass. This ignorance by Nature of his deepest grief may comfort the sane man; but to him with whom we are concerned, it comes as an added insult, a new tragedy. He, drinking his bitter cup, looks forth on the earth dressed for a summer morning, and feels how utterly alone he must be, when the very skies and trees are heedless of his sorrow. So to poor Danae, worn with fasting and tears, rocked on the summer waves by Seriphos, the breeze wafts songs of Halcyone and Ceyx; Œnone, breaking her heart on Mount Ida, hears the laughter of winds among the cypress-groves; Tristan, while he listens to his friend's just reproaches, is watching flowers awake as

a new sun slants into the Cornish garden. And you may be sure that Danae is not thinking only of her babe's sad condition, that Œnone's thoughts are not all with Paris, that Tristan's mind broods not on the dark future alone; but that each of them is keenly alive to the surrounding voices of waves and branches and morning breeze. So in this symphony, the tragedy is suggested not alone by sad or magnificent strains, but also in the really natural way, by a subtle arrangement of themes which represent every kind of emotion. As in every-day life, where the horrible elbows the funny, and tragedy treads on the skirts of farce, here gladness follows grief, and rage succeeds to mirth; but taken together, and considered in their mutual relationship, all are tragic.

Naturally enough the second part of the *Allegro con grazia* is an actual lament, to which the hollow throbbing of the drum

adds an impression of physical pain. I once heard of a man who, in the days before anæsthetics were discovered, had to undergo a frightful operation; it was performed in a country surgery, and his friends waited in a room below. One of them told me that he made no cries nor groans, but that during the whole time in which the thing was being done, the patient kept up a rhythmical beating with his heel upon the floor, which was more shocking to hear than screams. In acute suffering of any kind, the rhythmical sense seems to be unusually alert, and there are many examples of the employment of strongly-marked rhythms in musical expression of grief. Mozart's *Lacrymosa*, Handel's *Surely He hath borne our griefs*, Bach's *Come ye daughters, share my anguish*, are a few familiar instances. And this lament, to which the 5-4 rhythm is so well adapted, throbs itself away, like the first movement, into quietness; but it is

not the oblivion of sleep so much as the silence of exhaustion that enfolds it at the end.

IV.

On a March afternoon, after a day of rain and gloom, the wind sometimes springs up to half a gale and blows freshly into the sunset. The slanting rays cannot warm it as it whips your face, but they gild it with faint glory, and the day departs with dignity. The third period of the Pathetic Symphony is heroic in a similar way; after bitter sighs and tears, a gale of genuine strife sweeps into it here and blows away gloom. The heart is exalted on the wings of this hurricane and sings aloud in the fight, like the horse that "saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha." The very hopelessness that darkened other things, gilds this; there is a glorious insanity in the abandonment to battle; the clouds that formerly wept rain and dew yield here lightnings and thunder. And yet there

is something in this march that would make it sadly out of place at a wedding feast, and strangely appropriate at a military funeral. The sub-consciousness that the whole fight is useless, that victory is impossible, that Death is creeping nearer, would rob the most strenuous endeavours of their flavour; and even while you listen to these glorious, exalted strains, you feel that the fight is already over, the day lost. Now, if your thoughts fly back to the first bars of the symphony, to the cruel commotion that followed, to the heavy sighs, the poor, fugitive joys, the bitter tears, the hundred deaths that were suffered, it becomes plain wherein the tragedy of this work consists.

And now the sunset gun has sounded, the bunting that flickered so bravely in the sunlight has been hauled down, and the evening mists are rising. The last movement opens with the very touch of Death's chill hand; and no living man knows what that touch

means to the hopeless heart. The melody of the second subject, so like some of the earlier themes, recapitulates all the tones of suffering that have formerly been heard; it expresses every kind of heartache known to men and women: the sighs of lovers at parting, the lingering death of hope, the foul murder of trust; the benumbing sense of failure, the bitter knowledge of happiness passed by, the memory of priceless gifts rejected; and, most bitter of all, sorrows of years ago which might have been joys. These rise like a mirage before the fading sight and then dissolve away; the hour is at hand. There is one short, mad struggle, one last protest, a sinking and waning of the heart's energy, a failing at the wells of life, and then—darkness.

THE COMPOSER IN ENGLAND.

If thou wouldst be famous, and rich in splendid fruits,
Leave to bloom the flower of things, and dig among the roots.

IT is esteemed a mark of genius in a man if he have the power to separate his mind from the entanglements of uncongenial circumstance, and, rising beyond these, soar to a mental height where his fancy shall not be hindered by the blunders of destiny. They are indeed fortunate who can thus solve the problem of their life, but it is a mistake to suppose that this faculty is the inevitable accompaniment of every kind of genius. The divinely kindled fire that we call by that

name passes not always through the same stages of development; in a Milton, it early blazes up into a lofty flame, shining steadily and equally; in a Richard Wagner it glows and mantles, shining more and more, increasing at the last to a brilliant star; in a Nietzsche, it bursts into blinding light, that gradually burns itself out; in a Schumann, it flashes and occults; in a Mendelssohn it sparkles; and too often, a tiny glimmer, it dies for lack of tending. Only in a few of these cases is the man independent of his environment; in some of them it is absolutely essential to the growth, to the life even of his genius, that he should be in the midst of a life that shall stimulate and inspire him. Where that is wanting, and he is forced to dwell as a stranger amid alien surroundings, too often he is bitterly conscious of the fire within him whitening, dying, and at last crumbling into sterile dust.

In the case of a man to whom has been entrusted the power to express some part of himself in music, it is the human, and not the material environment that matters. To be sure he must hear good music; but putting that aside, if he dwell in dens and caves of the earth, if he fill his belly with husks, and yet have some congenial friends who can create for him an atmosphere of his art, and with whom he can live its life, the fire in him will but burn the more brightly. For it is an established truth that ease of circumstance and smoothness of life are not only unneccessary but inimical to a man's early artistic progress. It is strange that art, which represents all that is most peaceful and civilized in human life, may seldom be brought to perfection except by men who have struggled and fought; who have learned the thousand bitter lessons of life, have known its disappointments and felt its failures—exercising in the struggle

some of the old savage instincts of mankind; and this in order that in the sheltered garden of the arts flowers of theirs may bloom and flourish. But it is none the less true; Beethoven and Mendelssohn are extreme examples; but the one was a fighting man, leading outwardly a poor rough life, not less lonely in its circumstances than bitter in its privations, and he wrote the Pastoral Symphony as well as the Choral: while the other never had to fight an inch of his life; and his genius, which in his youth shone like a star, fell like a star throughout his years.

I need hardly say that it is not necessary for the cultivation of a man's genius that he should daily be in extremity for the necessaries of life. There is a kind of man calling himself artist, whose tongue is continually tolling the word Art, who delights to ape a picturesque penury, but, I make no doubt, takes care that he has his

material comforts: he apparently has yet to learn that genius exists not in the unclean garment nor the unwashed face. Fortunately, the species is not a common one in England, although specimens are to be found in most communities; but its existence seems to imply that there are people who think lightly of an artist if he be anything like an ordinary man. There are untoward circumstances in the life of a composer or an author that may be bravely fought; I could never hear that the struggle for some measure of comfort in a man's physical life blighted the life of his soul; but there are also circumstances which cannot be fought; to struggle against them is death to the spirit; and these, it would seem, are the circumstances that surround a young composer in England. The artistic atmosphere (to use the adjective in a colloquial sense) is hardly to be found here; the composer is an alien in his native land, trafficking in

thoughts which are not current among his fellows; and the plant he tends is sown in a soil prepared for other and very different growths. Players of instruments we can rear by the hundred in England, and (with the help, to be sure, of foreign masters) we can bring to perfection many kinds of executive musical art. In the hard physical drudgery which these demand, in the keenly competitive study, in the dogged determination of mind so essential to success, there seems to be something accordant with our national life and proper to our racial characteristics. Here is a kind of study in which success lies in a fairly certain ratio to the expenditure of time and effort; and that, above all others, is the kind of success that we understand and applaud. To a people of economic mind, the case of man who strives hard to acquire the faculty of expression in a difficult art, and, when he has acquired it, is able to turn it to no kind of

material account, must seem a rather pitiable example of unproductive energy. The few perhaps applaud the fruits of his toil; but since these are a minority, they are very likely to be set aside as cranks. And so for all practical purposes, the serious composer, when he exists at all, is a kind of outcast from us; we withhold from him remuneration for his work, honour for his art, and encouragement for his efforts.

Is anyone to blame for this state of things? Not the English public, for we do not expect it to listen to a symphony which bores it, nor to pay for songs which it does not like. Not the composer, for it is not his fault if he lacks the means to go abroad to some congenial place where he may find the necessary stimulus for his genius. And not the Government, for a State music-school, so far as the composer is concerned, would be a shade worse than the present kind. No, we seem to have the

same machinery in London for producing composers as they have in Vienna and Leipzig, but still the composers do not come. One reason, I submit, is to be found in the absence from English schools of that atmosphere which is a feature of the German. The two or three students of real promise that meet in an English *conservatoire* cannot of themselves create that atmosphere; they are too few; and more than that, they are rivals in a small field; there is not room for all. If Mr. X. loses money by producing my opera, you may be very sure that he will refuse you an audience when you bring him yours, though you be vastly the better man: and Messrs. Thirsty & Co., when I offer them my songs, may refuse to publish them because they have just been persuaded to give you five pounds for your pianoforte piece, and one adventure of that kind is enough for a great while. For it is really an adventure when an English publisher buys

high-class work from an unknown man; his safe and legitimate business lies in printing and publishing reams of stuff which he knows to be artistically worthless, which he also knows the public will eagerly buy and applaud.

Who or what are the people who produce the bulk of this stuff I need not say; but a cynic might be excused for saying that they are, for the moment, our really national composers, and this our national music. The taste of a people in art is shown not so much in the concert hall as in the drawing-room, less in the picture gallery than on the dining-room walls; and in music the English drawing-room taste is for these travesties of art: all that is commonplace, characterless, maudlin and invertebrate finds favour there; a mean prettiness is the most that is asked for; and the demand being for these, the supply is ready and constant. The artisan's parlour and the Countess's drawing-room

alike resound with this national melody of ours, and herein lies a consideration for the philosopher: the muse that sings of consumptive choir boys may draw a common sigh from the hearts of my lady and her scullery-maid; and we have but to rhyme "dart" and "heart" in the ear of the merchant and his chimney-sweep to set unison cords trembling. It is true that this catholic quality is one of the primary attributes of genuine art, but it may prove something very different from excellence in the art. If you drink *Zeltinger* rather than *Assmanshäuser*, it does not prove *Zeltinger* to be the nobler wine; rather it indicates a slender purse or an uneducated taste on your part. In England we cannot plead the slender purse, and even if we could, great music is cheaper than small: you may get fifty of Schumann's songs for half-a-crown, but you must pay one and eightpence each for mine. No, the reason for our refusal to

have good music at any price is simply the indifference of our taste. You may point to well-filled concert-rooms, where good and great music is performed, but that alters the case not one jot—they do not represent a national taste.

I have referred, somewhat vaguely, perhaps, to the atmosphere that surrounds a composer who is compelled to study his art in England. By that I mean an environment partly made up of the companionship of other minds, and partly of the spirit that informs his doings and those of his compeers. In England we are cursed with a spirit thoroughly amateurish; with regard to music, we are a nation of amateurs; we cannot be brought to regard it seriously except from the executant's point of view, and then we become commercial. From the silly clerk who in his spare hours picks out on the piano a sequence of notes, and having supported it with a change rung upon two

chords, thinks that he has composed a waltz; from him to the titled *dilettante* in whose mind the echoes of a hundred tunes consolidate themselves into a melody which he magines to be original, who hires a musician to render his notes grammatical, and an educated person to do the like by his verses, and thereupon publishes a song, the mass of our music-makers seem to have no higher end in view than the acquiring of a petty accomplishment which shall adorn them in the eyes of their friends.

Where an art is to flourish there must be traditions, and our musical traditions have been lost to us. In the art of letters, we have here a traditional pre-eminence, uninterrupted from age to age: for those who would practise that art, the path is beaten, and the way marked by milestone and finger-post; and a certain endowment is provided for them in the higher fields of journalism. Now, in music we have had

our traditions: Henry Purcell once sang in angelic strains and spun his sweet harmony of viols; Orlando Gibbons made jubilee with his glees; old Doctor Blow praised God in the sound of the trumpet, and upon the strings and pipe. These were men upon whose shoulders foundations of tradition might worthily rest; but what have we done with the inheritance they left us? Faint echoes of their voices you may still hear; in the sleepy evensong of the cathedrals, amid the droning of priests and the shuffling of feet, their harmony still resounds; still in some enthusiast's chamber, the thread-like tones of clavichords and gambas may waft us for a moment into their time; but out in the living world their art has been dead this half century and more; it is a ghost that visits in the aisles of cathedrals and museums.

Whatever faults we may have as a nation, it is not like us to disregard our worthy traditions. It is still something to us that the

foam flew behind Drake and Blake, and that navies fled before them; on the paths cut by Wellington, Chaucer, Reynolds, Defoe, our feet still bravely follow; and to be worthy of our traditions is a command not more inspiring on the battlefield than in the counting-house or the school-room. But in music the advance is all disorganized, and it seems that none is left to follow the only worthy leaders we have had. Great men, it is true, are not produced very often; but taking every caprice of Nature into account, the interval that has elapsed since the birth of the last great English composer is too long to be accounted for by chance. Other fields have not been so neglected, and considering that the greatest genius is dependent for its development on proper guidance and training, it is very likely that more than one Englishman has been born in this century who might have been a very great composer but for unkindly circumstances.

Unlike the art of letters, music has no endowment in England. The nearest approach to it that we have is in the church, which provides a bare living for a certain number of people who direct her musical service. But, unfortunately, a very high standard of musical ability is not necessary for this purpose, and qualifications much humbler than ought to be necessary are commonly accepted; and we do not find that the church organist usually turns his leisure to account by studying composition, or that, if he does the result is at all satisfactory. His music is, as a rule, less tolerable than that of his friend in the drawing-room; too often he has fledgling ideas about making church music "modern"; and we have the fiasco of Gounod's ***Redemption*** repeated, on a greatly reduced scale, in a thousand little horrors which are duly published at the perpetrator's expense. To be sure, these men are only sharers in the light and unworthy views of

music which we hold in this country; and if their position aggravates their offence, the remedy is first in the hands of those who employ them.

The point at which these mean and paltry views of musical art crept in and arrested its development is easily determined. When Mendelssohn first took us by storm in the morning of his genius, it was then that, as a nation, we abandoned the sterner quest. Whether he was really to blame for a nation's decadence, or only shared in an influence by which so many were infected is a problem too deep for my plummet; the accusation is too grave to be cast lightly upon the memory of a man who left some beautiful and abiding work; but there is no doubt that the same influence which proved fatal to Mendelssohn as an artist of the first rank arrested our own progress in music, and set us harvesting when we should have still been sowing. To make haste to be rich is

to lower one's standard of what is desirable, and that is what we have done. So instead of one great man we have half-a-dozen who are a little less than great; instead of fifty capable and conscientious artists, who might at least have led back our wandering steps into the one safe path, we have hundreds of mediocrities. Where once a deep spiritual beauty was the mark of our music we are now content with a superficial prettiness, and our inefficiency is made complete by an educational system which is little better than a gigantic farce. As composition is "taught" in the schools, it will never produce a composer; as well might you teach a bricklayer his trade and then call him an architect, or, having taught a man grammar, straightway expect him to write poetry. The architect, of course, must know how bricks are laid, the poet must have learned his grammar, and so must the musical composer have at his finger-ends the science of com-

bining notes; but to expect a pedagogue in a doctor's gown to guide a youthful genius up this flowery Parnassus is not less absurd than to expect Charon to guide him upon Olympian steeps. And as the one would very probably drag him into the first chasm that offered a likely means of regaining the dark river, so will the other, when occasion offers, entice the youth to his own bloomless meadows, there to make gambols in antic counterpoint. Small wonder if a youth trained in such a school fails to realise the seriousness with which his work must be gone about, and the responsibility with which he loads himself when he comes to express himself in the highest terms of his art. In the writing of a symphony there are as many problems to be solved as in the building of a church; and far beyond these in importance is the absolute duty of the composer to produce a thing that is beautiful. And when we think of beauty, surely we may

free ourselves from the idea of beauty exemplified in the Mendelssohn school, and reach after the ideals of Beethoven and Brahms. In a work of Brahms, you do not find "beauty" laid on like a coat of paint over a piece of botching; it is a quality that runs through every fibre of his work, to be found not only in the crowning vane, but in the deepest vaults of his foundations.

There are a thousand reasons why the musician should not be disheartened by this state of things. In the very end of the nineteenth century we have had some evidence—notably in the work of Mr. Elgar—that this discouraging atmosphere can not always prevail against the serious composer. To go on pluckily; to avoid cheap and ready effects as you would flee from the devil; to be less afraid of doing work that you may one day discard than of writing a single note which does not help to

express some definite idea of your own; to do your best always; these are old and simple rules, but in the keeping of them there is a great, though often only a secret reward. I have mentioned Brahms; and he, beyond all others, is the man whose example should be followed by the composers of this generation. In his work the problem of uniting the classical and the modern in music is easily solved; his hatred for anything mean and cheap, his lofty seriousness, his deep grasp of beauty —these are the qualities which we in England must absorb if we are ever to rise above our present passion for musical *chiffon*. Wagner, glorious companion, can never inspire; the path that he cut closed up behind him, and to think of one's own work while listening to his is to taste despair. But the work of Brahms encourages while it teaches; although it holds up the most

lofty ideal for us to strive after it will yet teach us what we may do with our own talents; and that knowledge is the great secret of success in any art. Whatever discouragements, difficulties, trials, may surround the composer in England, if he know well that lesson he has no right to despair. He is one of a hundred travellers upon the same dark road, all fumbling with the flint and steel of their talents. He may be no better equipped than his neighbours, he may be dragging far behind, he may be hindered by burdens of discouragement. But surely, even were the chance of success a thousand times smaller, it would still be worth while to struggle on; the uncertainty of the thing is its glory; when the time is ripe he may be the chosen instrument of Fate; to his hand the torch may be entrusted; and his, when glooms hang thickest, may be the cry, *Fiat Lux.*

CHARLES HALLE.

Though mean and mighty, rotting
Together, have one dust, yet reverence,
That angel of the world, doth make distinction
Of place 'tween high and low.

WHEN a musician or a painter writes his autobiography we may expect to find in its pages a much truer portrait of the man himself that can be drawn by any outsider. He can only judge by results, which, in the case of the artist, by no means faithfully indicate either the extent of his effort or the quality of his inspiration; for although from the frequent appearance of a certain quality in a man's work we may

safely enough deduce the presence of that quality in himself, yet the absence of such a quality in the work is no proof of its non-existence in the man. In the pages of his autobiography we generally see a portrait of the artist as he desired to be; well, if in addition to desiring, he made real and constant effort, that is the man himself; and a more faithful likeness, perhaps, than one drawn from his appearance in the world of achievement. It is true that the two views of an artist's life may sometimes be the same but that only happens when he has been able to find a congenial means of expression; and the more one studies the lives of creative artists in the light of their works, one is the more convinced that such a state of things seldom obtains, and that the great majority of them have been infinitely hampered, either by the possession of an utterance so fluent that it seized on the first means of expres-

sion that came to hand, without any attempt to discover in what channel it would most smoothly flow, or by their failure to find or create for themselves a form in which their genius could have its loftiest play. The case of executive musicians is much the same; many of them have the ill-luck never to get a chance of doing the kind of work for which they feel that they are best fitted, and to be judged by the result of their efforts in some uncongenial direction.

Charles Hallé was an example of the smaller and more fortunate class; what he wished to be, to a great extent he was; as we see him mirrored in the pages of his autobiography, so we find him portrayed in his actual achievements. It was this apparent smoothness in his life that made him at his death receive something less than justice from a certain section of the public; there had been no starvation in

bare garrets, no picturesque scuffling with fortune, no pinched and hungry old age; therefore said some who should have known better, Time has played us a trick; this man has been so long before the public eye that we have come to regard him as a great artist, whereas he has only been industrious, and a favourite of opportunity. They saw only the somewhat commonplace end of a career of which the initial force was derived from qualities that were very far from commonplace; and with the singular intolerance of some men for anything like material well-being in an artist's life, they attempted to damn with faint praise the comfortable close of an old man's pilgrimage. The story of its earlier stages, full of steadfast endeavour and brilliant achievement, they were possibly too young to remember or too ignorant to know, and too indolent to find out.

There were three sharply divided periods

in Charles Hallé's life, each of them remarkable in its own way. The little delicate boy living the simple life of a German country town at Hagen, the clever young pianist moving in the brilliant throng that made Paris remarkable in the early forties, and the sturdy old man fighting and working in a grim English manufacturing town were necessarily three distinct people; but when we reflect how much a man is moulded by his environment, and how absolutely different were Hallé's circumstances at these three places, we may marvel, not at the little differences between the three portraits, but at their great likeness. My own sympathies lie most with the old man and the little boy. When the autobiography came to be written, the things that the veteran remembered and thought worth recording about the little boy are very charming: how he was lulled to sleep by the sweetly sung duets of his good parents, and awoke

to the sound of the night-watchman's horn and the gruffly sung

"*Hört, ihr Leut, und lasst euch sagen,*"

which marked the passing of dark hours; how, on the last midnight of the year, he was taken to the window to look out on the snow-covered street, and hear children singing the chorale

"*Das alte Jahr vergangen ist,*"

how the little man of seven years spent all his spare time in studying and listening to music, and was delighted to be allowed to turn the leaves for a quartet party; how he cried bitterly to hear of Beethoven's death; and how pleased he was to be allowed to play the organ at church, and the piano at the homely town-concerts. The old man was very like him; although in the meantime he had lived in the most brilliant and fashionable society, he retained simple and homely ways, held fast to his old

child-like beliefs and customs, and retained his reverence for youthful idols.

I suppose that such a life as Hallé led in Paris and London keeps a man's intellectual equipment in perfect condition. To live in daily intercourse with men like Lamartine, Berlioz, Alexandre Dumas, Heine, Liszt and Salvandy is to have one's wits continually on the grindstone, and no doubt it is to this period of intellectual friction that Hallé owed the qualities that made him, even in his old age, so charming a companion at the dinner-table. In spite of this, the story of these years of his life has less interest than that of any other period; possibly because he was working very hard, and possibly because he was less remarkable among so brilliant a throng than when he moved in less exalted circles. Possibly, also, his native gravity of disposition made him, young as he was, seem like an elder brother in the noisy nursery of art; one

to whom the others brought their toys to be mended, their disputes to be healed, their joys and sorrows to be shared. It is easy to imagine Heller coming to play him his latest composition, sure of a sympathetic audience; to see Berlioz, madly excited over an additional note just discovered in the scale of some abysmal instrument, rushing with his score to show Hallé how it had been introduced; or to picture Liszt demanding his admiration for some more than ordinarily impossible feat of clavier gymnastics. But if he does not seem to us to have been a very interesting figure upon this stage, his sterling qualities attracted the affection of his contemporaries in no small degree. The man who was the chosen friend at once of Berlioz and Cherubini, of Wagner and Moscheles, of Chopin and Meyerbeer, must have been strangely magnetic; and the very stolidity which is a little irritating to mere spectators was

probably the quality that enabled him to stand rock-like in the midst of such a jabble of life, and attract the regard of all those brilliant grown-up children. What a tide ebbed and flowed round this quiet German musician ; I suppose there has never before been gathered so notable a group of artists, nor will be again. From the gay Paris salons of the early forties the lights have long been quenched, the guests fled, and their voices hushed ; but by the labours of Charles Hallé, who lingered latest on the threshold, many of those voices have been heard by us, and some are become familiar. And it is not the least part of our debt to him that he also called out of silence many a sweet old-world strain of Gluck, of Mozart and of Beethoven—voices that will sound long after his has been forgotten, echoes that will ring long after all memory of him and his work has departed.

Thirty years ago Hallé's playing and

conducting were held very high; of later days they have been loudly decried. The reason is plain; for during the last years of his life he was competing with men whose methods were quite different from his; a class who, in pianoforte playing, strive to convey what they take to be the composer's meaning, nor through the medium of sound alone, but by means of nods and becks: and, in conducting, supply, by vigorous movement of elbows and knee-joints, with here and there a grimace, a running commentary on the music which they direct. With such as these he had no sympathy, for his methods were absolutely unsensational. But with the wayward world, what is new is what attracts, and it is not wonderful that Hallé's genius was thrown into the shade by the performances of these interesting creatures. But I never knew a man to have more grip of an orchestra or of a keyboard. Richter has a hundred qualities that Hallé lacked;

but not even Richter holds his orchestra more completely in the hollow of his hand than did Hallé.

And for his playing of Beethoven and Mozart, I have heard nothing quite like it since he died. One has become used to the superb performances of Rosenthal, D'Albert and Busoni; listening to them one is astounded, bewildered, crushed; there is an oppression in the tragic significance with which they can clothe the utterances of Beethoven. These are giants who speak from the clouds; but they cannot handle a Sarabande of Bach with the peculiar touch that recalls the exquisite, sensitive voice of the clavichord, nor invest a fragment of Mozart with an old-world air that is like the smell of lavender on some pieces of faded bravery. These were things that Charles Hallé could do; and beside them, the things that he could not do seem of little moment. I readily admit that he did not understand or

sympathise with the new music; well, there are plenty of men who do; but how many are left in whom the spirit of Palestrina, of Bach, of Corelli, of Gluck, and of Mozart lives and moves? Few enough, heaven knows: the new men come by the score, and will continue to come; but the men of the old spirit pass silently, and do not return.

The crown of Charles Hallé's life was not his brilliant success as a pianist nor his greatness as a conductor, but something infinitely higher than both of these things, which included and was built up by them. In proportion as art flourishes in a place, the conditions of life there become brighter, and more kindly—*musica lux in tenebris*. He chose a spot that was dark and barren, plunged in the gloom of bald commerce, and there, surrounded by only a few congenial friends, he tried to prepare soil for his seed. The populations of large manufacturing towns tend to become narrow of mind, mean of prin-

ciple and meagre of soul. It is the work of the social reformer to arrest that tendency, and to create an upward trend towards things that are beautiful and good ; and in this work in which art and religion go hand in hand, Charles Hallé put forth efforts of strength and perseverance that can only be estimated by those who know things as they were and are. He ploughed and planted ; and there have been many signs that the harvest has already begun.

One of these, and not the least impressive, was to be observed on the day of his burial. It was not the few hundreds of students and influential people who obtained admission to the church in which his requiem was sung, not the tributes from sovereigns, princes, and other distinguished men and women ; not the sublime and tremendous rites with which the Catholic Church honours her departed heroes, nor the farewell that his orchestra played as his body was borne away.

But outside, in the choking November fog, a vast and silent jury pronounced its wordless verdict. On that grey day, typical of the environment of his later life, thousands greeted him as he passed silently through miles of Manchester streets. To these men, doomed to instant and ugly toil, his life had been an infinite blessing; in their hearts he had planted that precious and fruitful seed, the love of beauty. He had fought for them with their own chief weapon—dogged North-country persistence; and their uncouth signals of gratitude were an earnest of his victory. When his body disappeared in the whirling fog, they turned away, hard of face and dry-eyed; but who shall say what seeds of good did not quicken and expand under the influence of that moment?

CAMILLE SAINT SAENS:

AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee; Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

TOWARDS M. Saint Saëns and his work my attitude is very like that of the conscience-stricken defrauder of Inland Revenues who, for his own peace, remits a sum of conscience-money. The criticism of one's contemporaries is always a hazardous thing, since it is sometimes impossible, and always difficult to do more than review singly each successive effort which they put

forth without taking into account its possible bearing on former efforts, which we often forget, and on future efforts, of which we are necessarily ignorant. When they run a course parallel with our own the patches that form a man's life-work often seem to be ill-assorted and conflicting in their colours; but cast a backward glance on them, and perspective may blend them into a very pretty hue. And since the music of M. Saint Saëns has most of the qualities that grate harshly on my notions of what is good and abiding I think it is only fair to say that I find in it also qualities that, under certain conditions, appeal to me very strongly. It has long been a custom, or at least a tendency with critics of art to confine themselves, during a man's life, to pointing out his faults, and, after his death, to celebrate his virtues. On the shortcomings of this man's art one has often enough to ponder; for the moment

I would acknowledge its merits, and thereby discharge myself of a debt.

The nesting-time of a man's genius is usually passed in the pursuit of two ends: the learning of a fluent manner for its utterance and the finding of a congenial field for its exercise. The first of these ends is generally achieved, since many different paths lead to it; the second, which demands more ruthless self-denial, is seldom realised. But M. Saint Saëns seems to me to have arrived at both of them with considerable directness. In his case neither the means which he most successfully uses nor the psychological atmosphere which he most often selects are exactly what we should have expected. For his methods of expression are rather complex, and the things that he has to say are very simple. His unique musical grammar is the part of his work by far the most valuable to the science of music; the second is more admirable

from the artistic point of view. For it is seldom that we find a man gifted, as this man is, with extreme technical mastery, and at the same time contented to cast his best work in a simple and unpretentious mould; yet M. Saint Saëns seems to be quite conscious that he is incapable of great things, and quite ready to throw himself into that fascinating task, the doing of small things well.

Many greater men than Camille Saint Saëns have not been half so successful as he in finding the very best medium for expressing what they had to say. The great and voluble genius of Hector Berlioz never found a suitable element in which to sport itself, and by this we suffer an irreparable loss; for when it was turned loose into vast symphonic fields, it wandered blindly about, unhappy and distraught; chained to an opera stage, its plungings were disturbing and unseemly; while in the sacred precincts

of church music it grotesquely misbehaved itself. For that homeless and wandering genius I have an intense affection, although one must own that some of its manifestations are embarrassing. But Berlioz was only one of many men in every department of art whose genius has never found a true medium of expression; and the fact that M. Saint Saëns has taken pains to discover that medium is one on which we may congratulate both him and ourselves. Of course he has had to make experiments; but I think that the cases in which he has not chosen the right means of expressing what he had to say are surprisingly few. And what he says is always neat, beautifully polished and exquisitely refined. To be sure these are not great qualities; but then there is no pretence at greatness; and it is a fact that small and commonplace talents may be so brilliantly polished and so judiciously presented to our notice that they succeed in

conveying an impression, if not of greatness, at least of that masterful ease in the handling of a chosen theme which is an element of greatness and may consist very immediately with it. However plain a man may be to look upon, let him but dress himself with perfect taste, and (if he be not actually deformed) we shall regard him with some degree of favour. I am very well aware that these would be sorry arguments to advance if my object were to prove that this man's art as a whole is to be taken seriously; but that is very far from being my object. If our appreciative sense be focussed as we focus it for Mozart or Beethoven, we shall see here only a very ugly blurr; but if we can look close enough, we may find in that apparently featureless smudge some niceties of detail, if not of outline, the presence of which the more distant and comprehensive view would not have led us to suspect.

Most of M. Saint Saëns' music is of that

unfortunate kind that does not contain in itself the magnetic power necessary to deflect or to influence a man's mood. It must take its chance and hope to find him in the one frame of mind to which its appeal can be made. If one has been enjoying Mozart or Beethoven, one cannot away with it; after Wagner, one laughs at it. But there are times when, owing to the intemperate way we have of mixing music in this country, a man's palate must become clogged; when after one of our concert carousals, consisting of a little Beethoven, a little Spohr, a little (a *very* little) Mozart, and a great deal of Wagner, all sense of taste vanishes. So it is with me, at any rate; and at such times, if I cannot enjoy Beethoven, I can enjoy the music of M. Saint Saëns. If it has very little flavour, at least it sparkles; it is always cool and refreshing, and it generally has a tonic effect. At first sight it may seem that to describe

certain music as appealing only to jaded and jangled nerves is to pay it but a doubtful compliment; nevertheless I count it as a virtue in this music that its claims are at once so unpretentious and so successful. Its qualities are not wholly negative, for music that is merely weak and pretty is not to be endured under circumstances such as I have indicated; neither are they aggressive; music that loudly asserts its own individuality is the most irritating of all to a tired listener. But a certain trick of studied indifference as to whether it pleases us or not turns the balance in its favour; and although we may be very sure that its indifference is pretended and the seriousness of greater music real we are in such a case that well-bred nonchalance has the greater attraction for us. I am vividly reminded of a certain performance of M. Saint-Saëns's pianoforte Concerto in D minor which I heard not long ago. It came in the middle of a most un-

satisfactory concert, in which works by Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Tchaïkovsky and Mozart had been arranged with such devilish ingenuity that each killed the other and all seemed dismally out of place. The G minor concerto in the middle of this medley was something to look forward to and back upon; its exhilarating champagne sparkle, its delightful freshness, its clearly-marked little themes, its surprising contrasts of pretty lament and irresistible buoyancy of spirits fell gratefully on a teased and worried consciousnesss. The man's limits are clearly marked, but he seldom exceeds them. What constitutes the charm of his music is that we seldom see him at a disadvantage, never find him working with tools of which he does not know the use or blending materials of whose properties he is ignorant.

All this may amount to very little more than a perfect mastery of the art of posing. And why not? All artificiality is not bad

art, although, if we accept Mr. Walter Pater's definition, it can never be great art; and a man who aims only at a perfect command of all the little surface niceties of life sets himself no mean task. If he succeeds, I am not aware that those who fail to compass more considerable ends need withhold from him a measure of admiration; for success is sometimes as artistic as failure. M. Saint Saëns's music is art within an art; the shell, if only we break it gently, will discover a curious kernel, small, sweet, marvellously wrought, but cradled in poison.

AN IRISH MUSICIAN.

"Land of song!" said the warrior-bard,
"Though all the world betrays thee,
One sword at least thy right shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

AN ancient legend tells us that long before the birth of Christ, when Ireland was divided into two kingdoms, a dispute arose between the reigning monarchs Heber and Heremon as to which of them should possess a captive musician named O-Naoi; that the matter was referred to Fate for decision by the casting of lots; and that Heber, the King of the South, was so fortunate as to secure the custody of this

very skilful musician, who continued for many years to delight his sovereign by the exercise of an entrancing art. From this circumstance, say certain Irish antiquaries, the south has ever been more renowned for music than the north. It is certainly a pleasant tribute to the wanderer's art, and, since the fact is indisputable, we need not find fault with the reasoning; moreover, the spirit that lived in the legendary O-Naoi has since spread through the whole population of his country, and is now manifest, not so much in individual artists of surpassing merit, as in the people themselves, whose life it enriches and invests with a wild sweetness. Over the whole country of Ireland there broods a spirit that cannot well be expressed in words; but it breathes in the infinite, soft greenness of the northern country, it calls from dark and lonely vales in the south, and it speaks loudly in the storm-swept shores of the west. In country

places, empty of all sound but the singing of birds, and in mean towns where poverty, dirt, and much happiness dwell together, that spirit is equally to be found; and in the eyes of Ireland's children, as in her own, shine the "tear and the smile."

An atmosphere so subtle and so universal as this finds its freest expression in music; but it is rather an odd fact that the countries which are richest in native musical spirit are comparatively poor in the production of what may be called civilised music. Bohemia and Ireland are two pertinent examples. The Bohemians are probably the most richly endowed of all peoples with the power to make music; but Bohemia has not produced many great composers. And the Irish, as I have said, are lyrical in their very nature; their folk music is a treasure-house of purest melody; but the composers of lasting fame whom Ireland has produced may easily be counted on the

fingers of one hand. In the case of these two countries, the reasons to which this absence of production may be attributed are, I think, different, but the primary cause which underlies them shows that the result is not accidental. In the case of Bohemia (and in a lesser degree, of Hungary) the life of the people is such that a musical currency is constantly maintained; the plant so flourishes that it is unnecessary to have any garnered store. Where musical ideas of genuine value are daily being conceived and circulated it is not worth any one man's while to write his music down; and if he did, it would be less his own than that of his nation, for art is held as a commonwealth in these countries. Their representative composers, when they exist, are not as a rule men peculiarly gifted in individual musical expression, but are simply mouthpieces to voice the national folk-melody.

In the case of Ireland, there is little or no interchange of musical utterance among the people. Music with them is in an earlier and more savage period; it is not a gift consciously exercised for any special purpose so much as an elemental fire smouldering in the caverns of their nature; and although its presence is hardly realised by the people themselves, it is manifested in the daily round of their lives. If you were to talk to an Irish peasant girl about music, she would hardly understand you; but withdraw from her a little, and leave her at her work; presently (if you have ordinary luck) you will hear upon her lips such a melody, tearful, smiling, lonely, as you would give your right hand to invent. But Ireland is a poor—one sometimes thinks, a forgotten country; where nature needs so much cultivation if she is to support life, art must needs go uncultivated. And so her gifted sons, who, if they lived in Ger-

many, would be sent to a *conservatoire*, and, if need were, fed and clothed, are to-day toiling for very life at the meanest tasks: working, perhaps, in wind and rain, on a poor moorland farm; perhaps cutting peats on some dark mountainside; perhaps stung by salt sprays while they gather the sea-weed from some wild echoing beach.

My present end, however, is not to dwell upon these sad aspects of Irish music, but more happily, to record my appreciation of one Irish musician whom Fate has not chosen to leave in obscurity. Charles Villiers Stanford is a tried man; his work has become resolute and consolidated; and although he is now only in his prime all traces of uncertainty or indefiniteness have long since disappeared. It would be unseemly, and, fortunately, it is impossible for me to attempt a criticism of Dr. Stanford's work; his is work which one loves even more than admires; while the art of some

men is knocking at the doors of the brain, his has entered into the heart, and there it most securely abides. This is a great deal to say about contemporary art of any kind, for when the same conspiracy of circumstances produces it as moves the wheels of one's own life, the dividing distance, instead of seeming greater, seems less. And when one meets the artist in the flesh and finds that he is, outwardly, very like a hundred unremarkable men one knows, with nothing striking about his manners or conversation, one is apt to mistrust one's first impression and to harden one's heart against his work. Fortunately this is a consideration which influences an honest man only on the right side. It makes him slow to belittle the work of a contemporary with whom he may not find himself in sympathy; but if, in spite of the natural doubts he may have as to the genius of his fellow at school or college, that man's work rouses him to enthusiasm, he

has no need to hold his tongue. It may interest some people to compare what they know of a man himself with what they see in his work, and to trace resemblances between the angle at which he wears his hat and the way in which he scores his symphonies, but it is very idle and valueless. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that an artist who creates, whether he be poet, painter, composer or author, is to be criticised on the merits of his work alone; no circumstances of his private life should be considered in relation to it. Who is to say that the man is more himself when he is behaving unkindly in his family and mismanaging his affairs, than when he writes his ode or paints his picture? Judged at the one moment, he may be foolish and not respectable; at the other he may be a messenger inspired of Heaven.

Although it may have no direct bearing on Villiers Stanford, this is not an excursion

from my subject. For when one tries to express in words appreciation of a man's work, one is naturally anxious to make it as valuable as may be ; and it is wise not to underestimate the prejudices and temptation which beset one in such a task. I know next to nothing of this man personally, but to live in the same country and time that he lives in is intimacy compared to the gulf of separation between a present-day critic, and, say, Mozart. And one must be chary of judging one's intimates. I confess that it is very likely I should think even more highly than I do at present of Dr. Stanford's work if he had lived in the last century—possibly because I should know it better. And if despite all the tendencies and temptations to think lightly of it one yet finds that the work of a living man compels one to increasing affection and admiration, it may be allowed that the work is worthy and enduring.

It is a limitation of folk-music that in its rudimentary forms it appeals only to the people of its own land. If its charm is to be understood by people of a different race it must be clothed in cosmopolitan dress, and embodied in one or other of the catholic forms of art. It expresses the spirit of its native land, but only in a subtle native language which must be translated for the benefit of people whose habits and tongue are different. And the spirit of Ireland has found in Villiers Stanford a voice strong enough to waft it far beyond the green shores of its birthplace. What Bach and his followers have done for Germany, what Tchaïkovsky has done for Russia, Lulli for France, Grieg for Norway, and Dvorák for Bohemia, he has done for Ireland; and the spring of melody which he has opened will flow far and wide. I do not hesitate to say that for absolute suaveness of melody the Irish folk-music is unequalled. It has not

anything like the range of expression found in the German tunes, but within its own limits it is the perfection of lyrical music. When a man can impregnate himself with it, as Stanford has done, so that nearly everything he writes takes on its peculiar tone, austere yet delicate, sad yet smiling, his music can hardly fail of distinction. And all the characteristics of Irish music are to be found in Dr. Stanford's original work. He has a certain homely touch when handling a big subject which is one of the most genuine characteristics of his work. The exile sickens for his native land; the statesman who has risen from some humble estate to a proud eminence has, some time or other, a vague regret and longing for the simple joys of his childhood; and may we not say that this man's genius, when it is expanding itself in some great and complex form, may unconsciously stretch out a hand towards the good folk-spirit who watched beside its cradle?

There are many other qualities in Stanford's music which, like the play of thoughts on a man's face, impart to it the warm glow of life. In his Irish Symphony, which may be described as an essay in tone on the Irish spirit, all these are found in combination. In that Symphony there is here and there a touch of rude austerity, almost of roughness, which is no less Irish than the sweet melodic freshness so characteristic of the work as a whole. The mercurial changes of feeling, the effects of light and shade, of sun and cloud, the fresh and ever fresh springs of melody that invigorate this music with their vernal newness, the glowing heart that burns beneath it all—these are things that rise from a man's very nature and cry out to be expressed. No art could invent them, but only the artist can fashion their formless cry. The Irish Symphony is great because it abounds in words of life which only music can voice; because it is pure and austere

and delightful, like the west wind when it bathes one's face with the essence from a thousand curling Atlantic crests; because it breathes a spirit to call men back from brighter skies, and to beckon them to the land of their birth.

In all Stanford's music which is known to me I find the same genuineness, the same spontaneity, the same humanity; one may find faults of workmanship, but one never doubts that here was something that the man was compelled to utter: a message written in that ageless tongue which one has only to be human to understand; a gospel to cheer, to stimulate, to ennoble; a nature that grips hands with the world; an art that crystallises good nature into an imperishable monument. This is the kind of foundation on which good fame most surely rests; and it is because Stanford's music has the power to grip men's hearts in a far greater degree than the music of his

contemporaries has it, that I think his name and fame will be left standing among the ruins of much that now seems likely to endure. Only in the heart can a memory be so embalmed that it will defy the corruption of time; we may admire a man's work, stand in awe of it, perhaps, but mere admiration fades sooner or later; while the memory of things that we love is preserved faultless, and handed from generation to generation.

HECTOR BERLIOZ.

Does the road wind up-hill all the way ?
Yes, to the very end
Will the day's journey take the whole long day ?
From morn to night, my friend.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak ?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek ?
Yes, beds for all who come.

TO students of his life and work Hector Berlioz appears in a three-fold aspect. First, we see the man through the medium of his work: a master of interpretative means, a realist in music. Secondly, we have Berlioz as he appeared to himself: the

unappreciated genius, the quarry of ill-luck, the hero stemming spring tides of misfortune. And thirdly, we have the man as he really was : genius, artist in life ; an egoist, greedy and niggardly of sympathy, but generous of himself ; a glutton for experience, a scholar of his own nature. The last portrait necessarily contains the features of the first two, but each is so interesting as to deserve separate study for its own sake ; taken together, the three enable us to appreciate one of the most attractive and astonishing characters of the nineteenth century. Wagner said of him that "he lies buried beneath the ruins of his own machines," and as a musician that may in part be true of him ; but to dispose of Berlioz in such a sentence is to confess that, in contemplating the obvious failures of his life, one has missed altogether its essential success. Let it at once be granted that he was too human a creature to be a great citizen ; that he was

too complete an artist to be a successful musician; that he was too brave a liver to be a very happy or comfortable man. For to shrink back from joy no less than to shirk trouble is to play the coward in life; he only can be said to live who takes the heart out of every hour and, whether he breasts into the blue of life or idles in its shallows, accepts as of course the consequence of every act.

Hector Berlioz was that sort of man. His finely adjusted mind worked only at high pressure; he either did things or did them not; he had no capacity for half measures. All through his life we find him enthusiastic; and whether he is writing a love-letter or a symphony, whether he presides over the production of his latest opera or assists at the exhumation of his wife's bones, we find him addressing himself to his task with a whole heart and with a determination to extract the last flavour

from each experience. Every sensation of his life was a cup to be drained to the dregs, and he smacked his lips almost as heartily over the bitter as over the sweet draught. I suspect, indeed, that the sweetness or the bitterness was a secondary consideration with him; what he cared for was to taste all the bitterness and all the sweetness. It was exercise for all his quick faculties that he craved; the sensation of being alive was not enough for him; he must be alive in every nerve, and not only alive but living, tingling with action. As we shall presently see, his success and his failure alike lay in his wholeheartedness. His appetite for life was too vast to be satisfied with fainthearted conduct. He lived by the heart, and therefore his life was youth prolonged; he had no joys but passionate ones, none but acute griefs. This is youth—the condition of extremes; age reduced him to none of those ignoble capitula-

tions by means of which men smooth their way in life; it found him still defiant of unhappiness — that greatest injustice of youth; and it found him still wide-eyed with wonder at the act and circumstance of living.

I.

As a composer of music Berlioz has no very high place in the roll of popular fame. I have said that he was too complete an artist to be a very great musician, and that apparent paradox contains a truth. For the great musician, like the great painter or sculptor, must have his genius focussed and concentrated in one direction, otherwise he cannot be pre-eminent in his art. The genius of Berlioz was of a large and diffused order, far too comprehensive to confine itself to one art, but rather craving for expression in as many different forms as possible. He was but accidentally a musician, although it is true that he chose the profession himself;

certain conditions of his early youth, combined with a moderate talent for inventing tunes, gave him a bias toward the art of music. Probably, too, he was attracted by a prospect of the vast possibilities and infinite range of music as compared with any other art. At any rate, after an unsuccessful attempt to prosecute the study of medicine he gave it up and applied himself with ardour to the study of music. He had a somewhat stormy career under Lesueur at the Paris Conservatoire and afterwards, having after three failures obtained a much coveted scholarship, he repaired to the French Academy at Rome in order to continue his studies. But I cannot find that music occupied the students of that institution very immediately; there were too many bottles of bad wine—*gros vin noir rempli de moucherons*—consumed; by all accounts the students lived very riotously; so no doubt Monsieur Berlioz was educating himself

in more humane matters. Afterwards he travelled in Russia and Germany and then returned to Paris where most of his works were composed, and where, under stress of poverty, he became for a time a musical critic and developed the literary style that served him so well as a means of expression. After having spent a few years in London as conductor of the Covent Garden Opera and director of the Philharmonic Concerts he returned to France and died there.

What Berlioz actually accomplished in music falls under two heads: his direct and his indirect achievements. The first are the least considerable, and consist of various compositions of which nearly all display genius of a peculiar kind; but hardly one of them is entirely satisfactory as a work of art. He composed operas, cantatas, a few songs, a few masses and some large orchestral works; and although in many of them one finds music of great charm and purity

they have one great failing in common. If you read the composer's own description of, say, the *Roméo et Juliette* symphony you are almost dazzled by the wealth and brilliancy of his artistic expression, and you are amazed by the ingenuity with which he represents poetical feeling in his music. But when you come to hear the music itself, there is a link wanting between the musical effect and his own description of it. Say that there are four links in the chain that connects music with thought: the mechanical production of sound in an instrument; the making of sound into music; the moulding of music into forms which shall arouse emotion; the choosing of that exact shade of emotion which shall suggest to the listener the right idea. Of this scheme it is the last link that nearly all of Berlioz's compositions lack. It was not that his imagination was feeble, but that it was wild and untameable. He could not, or would not discipline it so

that its expression should be intelligible to the outside world. The force of it was, indeed, astonishing; mention a subject, and his ideas would rise like a cloud of startled sea-birds, whirring and beating in his brain. His imagination was absolutely unfettered; no flight was too great for its strong wings; and Berlioz had none of that prudent timidity that saves men from absurd and denies them celestial experiences. With most men that timidity is bound up with their sense of humour; and if they would throw Jonah overboard, compass and chart must go along with him. But with Berlioz no prudential sacrifice involved his sense of humour, and although we may find little sign of it in his music, it really was his guide through the perils of a passionate life, and it only deserted him when at last he floated harmlessly upon the broad reaches of an early senility.

But that saving grace, since it permitted

him to give rein to his imagination, stultified him in his attempts to express himself in music; attempts that resulted, as I have said, in a kind of failure—at least in so far as achievement of their first end was concerned. In the symphony I have mentioned this failure is particularly noticeable. He tells us how he represented the soft dews, the garden perfumes, the murmuring wind of a summer night, talking trees, pale moonlight; but his music, unaided by explanatory programmes, would hardly suggest these things. It rather suggests the name of them; one never gets beyond the brazen instruments, the cleverly stopped strings, the careful conductor, the complicated score; one seldom sees beyond the great orchestral mechanism to the shadowy land of fantasy. He was far too much absorbed in the manipulation of his means to take much care for the end—a condition of mind, no trare in lesser men than he, which

lies like a gin in the path of all artistic endeavour.

One can picture him, his mind alive with some new and wonderful fancy, sitting down before a ream of fair score-paper; for a page or two, perhaps, the musical idea would hold its own amid the conflicting interests of figuration and orchestration; but in a little while the seductive business of distributing a melody between horns in F and D and A would draw his mind from its original occupation, and he would presently lose himself amid a throng of instruments each clamouring for possession of the melody. That is the way in which most of his instrumental compositions begin and continue—a few really good musical ideas carefully and beautifully worked out for a few bars, and at last becoming a mere parrot-cry amid all the instruments of the orchestra. The man who had so quick an ear for the individual qualities in every instrument, and in every key of

every instrument, could never find it in his heart to show any partiality in the distribution of his musical matter.

He had some more serious defects that interfered with his musical expression. A curious lack of form and sense of proportion was among the chief of these; he was seldom loyal to the old rules of form, and had nothing better to put in their place, so that we find chaos too often taking the place of order. The fact also that he had no appreciation or even knowledge of Bach's music told very seriously against him; little as Bach has apparently to do with modern form, music of his manner is an invaluable discipline and education in the welding together of thematic material. And, perhaps, most serious of all, Berlioz was a shockingly bad hand at counterpoint. He refused to study it seriously, but then he had no innate sense of counterpoint such as might make it possible for him

to dispense with the study of it. These were his chief technical defects; and when one considers their gravity one is surprised, not that many of his works suffer deplorably from his deficiencies, but that in spite of them he wrote some music on an extended scale that will bear the closest scrutiny and criticism by the highest artistic standards. His great *Te Deum*, parts of the *Requiem* and a few choruses in *L'Enfance du Christ* are informed with a superb artistic merit that expresses itself with immense variety.

In some of his smaller works, too, and especially in some of the songs, a sincere and happy expression has been achieved. Where he was untrammelled by mechanical contrivances he sometimes found in music an utterance for the dark and melancholy side of his nature. In the "Nuits d'été" there is an expression of that infinite melancholy—*isolement* he calls it—which tinged his soul when he brought it into contact

with the marvellous natural world. Berlioz had an acute and almost agonising perception of the beauty which assails the senses, and of the beauty which is found in nature. From such a nature as his contemplation of that beauty wrings expression charged with a kind of ecstatic grief. A fellow-countryman of Berlioz has expressed in words the same feeling that he expressed in some of his music; in many of Paul Verlaine's verses you find reflected that sense of beauty and sadness combined with which imperfect man regards the perfect world.

But successes like these were the accidents of Berlioz's genius; he ever rushed impetuously to set forth his ideas; the severe self-criticism that attends the production of great utterances was unknown to this impulsive child. I think he never considered whether or no any of his ideas were worth setting down—they were his ideas, and that was enough. He was a

real impressionist—different indeed from the ape-like creature who lashes his intellect into a distorted posture—but still an impressionist. What he saw, he felt, and what he felt, he expressed; and his failure to convince us is an example that illustrates the fallacy of the impressionist. For considered as art, the truth of that kind of expression is the lying half-truth. Artistic utterance is something far greater and wider than the mere voicing of a momentary experience; it is rather the bringing of all experience into accord with the artists' own nature, and the exhibition of it in the light of his own personality. The music of Berlioz represents him only negatively; what was absent from his nature is absent from it; the honesty of the relationship goes no further. It is the failure of his music to reflect half the vivid colours of his nature that robs it of the most valuable attributes. Considered as music, as stuff to

be heard in the concert room or the theatre, the world might loose it all and not be much the poorer.

So much for his direct achievements. Indirectly, the labour and broodings and tears and ecstacies that went to the making of his music have been of benefit to every composer of to-day. There is no one but has felt its influence, no one but has learned something from him. One quality that kills the effect of much of his music in a concert room—a kind of dismal, dogged hammering in of his ideas, a grotesque precaution lest we should miss the significance of his inventions—that very quality is to the student an advertisement of his greatness. One could point to passages in a dozen of his works that illustrate the astonishing complacency with which he regarded any piece of originality in orchestration or musical phrase-making. Through bar after bar he repeats his effect until the dullest hearer cannot fail to take

note of it. A familiar example is the effect of bells with which the first movement of his symphony *Harold in Italy* ends. That particular use of the horn was invented by Berlioz; the poetic end of the music would have been perfectly served by a few repetitions; but that would not do for him. At this point of the symphony the composer steps down for a moment and the master of orchestration rises in his place, pointing with a complacent smile to the result of his most recent researches. And so the thing is dinned into our ears for an outrageous length of time.

A still more patent instance of this trick is in *Les Troyens* when the composer introduces what he is pleased to call a dance of Nubian slaves. I know of nothing more abominable in written music. Our genius had just discovered a new rhythm which he proceeded to patent and advertise in his usual manner. Lest our attention should be dis-

tracted by melody or harmony, he banished these from his dance; and there remains a bald, empty, naked rhythm—a skeleton of music, and a dancing, bone-clattering skeleton at that. One has heard a baby playing with a tin plate and spoon; that is the kind of thing. There is something fiendish in the ugly, banging noise that tortures the nerves most horribly. Yet no musical student could sit through that agony without noticing the means—the perfectly ingenious means—by which the monstrous effect is obtained. And of course the knowledge is useful. In this way Berlioz's science (to use a convenient term for his supreme art) was nearly always at war with his art; and since his science is really more important to posterity than his art, it matters the less.

It is hardly necessary to speak of his contributions to the technical resources of the composer, for that is the great, obvious fact of Berlioz's life. Only Wagner was his

equal in writing for the orchestra, but as Wagner never went into interesting detail as to how he produced his effects, his work was the less valuable from this point of view. The crowning merit of Berlioz's labours was not that he wrote a Treatise on Instrumentation—other people have done that—but that he wrote a treatise in such a heat of enthusiasm, with such a charm of personal style, and with such a perfectly suitable literary instrument that it wins a student to the subject for very love of the writer. A child might read it as he would read a fairy story; oboes and horns and trombones would be living people to him, to be treated as reasonable beings and cared for (on paper) as one cares for animal friends.

The *Grand Traité* was by far the greatest achievement of its author; he turned a whole valley of dry bones into a garden; he evolved an art from what had been an exact science, and pierced dead things with the "in-

breathed sense" that makes them immortal. And these great things he did, not in the line of his chosen expression, but outside of what he deemed to be his real business. As a composer the verdict must go against him, for he failed to express himself truly in music.

II.

Ma vie laborieuse et agitée. This was Berlioz's own description of his career, and it gives us the full picture of his life as he saw it himself—labour and unrest. The storm and travail of 1830 brought forth no more strenuous or revolutionary spirit than his; he came forth out of the scorching fires of renewal ablaze with the zeal of the patriot and artist. If we are to realise fully what the turmoil of life meant for him, we must understand the circumstances in which he spent his youth and came to an understanding of himself.

The first scenes are hardly attractive.

They show us a morbid, neurotic child with a mind like a little vacant hothouse, ready to receive and force the growth of the first impression that should come. The first was religious: incense, a bright spring morning, white-robed maidens, the Roman plainsong, the eucharistic hymn, the mystic sacrament—the child's first idea of God. These things do not last at ten years old; they bloomed and withered quickly in the hothouse, and their place was taken by a passion for geography—the geography of imagination, in which maps are bright visions of sea-filled creeks and green islands. Next came Virgil, bearing down in the full sail of epic poetry, and filling the childish mind with living dreams. The influence of Virgil never passed, but it had to make room for the next impression—a human one. Estelle and her pink shoes and her brilliant eyes—and a poor twelve-year old child creeping away "like a wounded bird,"

and hiding himself in the maize-fields and orchards.

In the development of every nature there is a climax reached, a point attained only once, a flight to the highest, towards which we ascend, and from which we slant downwards. Some soar long and painfully, to drop like a shot bird; some flash upwards like a rocket, and float down in falling star-dust. But we have no foothold on those high levels; it is a leap or a flight up from and back to our own grosser element; the most we can hope for is to sustain the flight for a little, and perhaps to alight at last on some point higher than the first. The ascent of little Berlioz at twelve years to the dream-blue element of a child's adoration and the plumbdrop to despair marked his climax—the limit of the tether that restrained his nature; time and again he made the flight, time and again dropped downwards at the same limit, which he never

exceeded, if indeed, he ever attained it again. It may seem absurd to say that a child twelve years old could determine the limits in which his nature was confined, but essentially it is true in this case. We shall presently see how much this childish episode tinged Berlioz's life; here it falls into its place among the incidents of youth that prepared his destiny.

To the influences of Estelle and Virgil was presently added that of music. It was upon that art that Berlioz's supreme general ability first displayed itself. I am convinced that he was not, as we say, "a born musician," but simply a highly developed human being whose genius found a better expression in music than in any other single art. He seized on music as upon something that was a voice for his nature, and on the sunny hillsides of La Côte St. André, in the companionship of Virgil and Gluck and his ideal Estelle, the child soul that never matured

through a stormy life came to consciousness. Next came the conflict between his vague instinct about himself and his father's worldy-wise ignorance of his son's nature—an old story; then the half-hearted study of medicine, and the flight in horror through the window of the dissecting-room. Afterwards the dreary though heroic struggle—often for a bare living—began in earnest. It never ended, for Berlioz was ever at war with himself or his surroundings.

This, then, was all his preparation for the life that burst upon him like a thunderstorm. It is of a piece with Berlioz's character that he should have had an almost infinite capacity for unhappiness. That he had ample reason for it is beyond a doubt; indeed, I know no life-story that contains one half of the disappointments and discouragements that Berlioz's contained. Wagner suffered much in his way, but Wagner suffered chiefly through opposition,

while Berlioz suffered in everything. Did he desire to devote his life to art? His father's temper and his mother's heart must first be broken. Did an opportunity arise by which he could reveal his work to the world under fair conditions? Officialism or jealousy must step in to turn his triumph into a ludicrous *fiasco*. Even in his humiliations ill-luck attended him. In need of firewood and warm clothes during the first winter of his independence, he applied for a place as flute-player at the Nouveautés, but even in this he was unsuccessful; and one of the few triumphs that he has to record of this period is that he finally succeeded in getting a place as chorus-singer. It is a grotesque and a pathetic thought, this of the inspired dramatic composer singing and marking time, and going through wooden stage antics in company with a score of other unfortunates; yet I am sure that if you had happened to be

sitting in the pit of the Théatre des Nouveautés any evening in the winter of 1825, you would have noticed, if you had examined the chorus closely, the nervous mouth and thin, hawk-like visage and flashing eyes of one chorus-singer, who was trying to put his whole heart into whatever wretched clap-trap he might have to perform.

To enumerate the disappointments and knock-down blows that fortune administered to Berlioz throughout his life would be a tedious and dismal task; the slightest study of his biography will show in what formidable degree they assailed him. The fact that they existed and the fact that he never allowed himself to be defeated by them gave his life a tone of plaintive triumph. Always fighting, often defeated, never failing to conquer in the end, always complaining—it was thus that a child and a dreamer accomplished a man's work and lived strenuously among the hardest and crudest realities.

I have tried to indicate the main features of Berlioz's life as it appeared to himself —striving and misfortune and suffering, with a few paltry and tardy triumphs ravished from a niggardly fortune. He himself, the man of his dreams and ambitions, stands in sharp contrast to the creature actually produced by so stormy an environment. And first Berlioz, the grand egoist, saw himself alone as an apostle of the Revolution as it expressed itself in music. We know that there were others in that marvellous group of 1830 who fought the same battle, but in his own view Berlioz stood and fought alone far in front of the van, bearing the heat and burden of the advance. With his marvellous powers of realizing and imagining he saw at one glance the possibilities of his art if it could only be set free from the mesh of absurd and paralysing pedantry which surrounded it; he thought that he must do all this tearing down and building up without help; he

realized how short the longest life-time was for such a task; and, of course, he suffered agonies of impatience and helplessness. And along with this vision of saving and restoring, he saw another—that of Hector Berlioz as he might be if the world were Paradise and there were no bread to be earned or musical mandarins to be fought. This was the idea realized by Heine when he was impressed by the primeval grandeur of some of Berlioz's music. "It makes me think of vast mammoths or other extinct animals," he said, "of fabulous empires filled with fabulous crimes, and other enormous impossibilities. He is a magician, and he calls up Babylon, the hanging gardens of Semiramis, the marvels of Nineveh, and the vast temples of Mizraim." That was just such a vision as Berlioz saw of himself, but which is not really often revealed in his music. One finds it rather in his talks about music, in his descriptions of music and in those grand

passages in the Treatise on Instrumentation where he expands into discussion of the possibilities existing in instruments and combinations of instruments. He had a sympathy, an almost passionate sympathy, which seems absurd to all but a few types of musical temperament, with the genius of large and deep orchestral instruments. Contemplation of them fired his imagination to such an extent that he carried his dreams of their effects in combination far into the realms of fantasy. Consider this for example:

"The effect of harps is in proportion to their number. The notes, the chords or the arpeggios which they can then throw out amidst the orchestra and choir are of extreme splendour. Nothing can be more in keeping with ideas of poetic festivities, or religious rites, than the sound of a large body of harps ingeniously introduced." And again: "The clarinet is an epic instrument, like the horns, trumpets and trombones. Its voice is that

of heroic love : and if masses of brass instruments, in grand military symphonies, awaken the idea of a warlike troop covered with glittering armour, marching to glory or death, numerous unisons of clarinets, heard at the same time, seem to represent loving women with their proud eyes and deep affection, whom the sound of arms exalts ; who sing while fighting and who crown the victors or die with the defeated."

Or this :

" Double choruses are of a richness and pomp quite remarkable ; they are certainly not hackneyed nowadays. . . . There are compositions for three choirs. When the idea they have to render is worthy of so magnificent an investure, such bodies of voices divided into twelve or at least nine parts produce impressions the memory of which is ineffaceable, and cause grand choral music and rank as the highest among arts."

" Drums are rarely well placed in other

than large orchestras of wind instruments. Their effect is the better and nobler in proportion as they are more numerous; a single drum has always appeared to me mean and vulgar. But eight, ten, twelve or more drums executing in a military march, rhythmical accompaniments or *crescendo* rolls prove magnificent and powerful auxiliaries to the wind instruments. Simple rhythms become attractive when performed by a body of forty or fifty drums alone."

Of the trombone he says: "It is in my opinion the true chief of epic instruments. It possesses in an eminent degree both nobleness and grandeur; it has all the deep and powerful accents of high musical poetry, from the religious accent, calm and imposing, to the wild clamours of the orgy. It depends on the composer to make it by turn chant like a choir of priests, threaten, lament, ring a funeral knell, raise a hymn of glory, break forth into frantic cries, or sound its

dread flourish to awaken the dead or to doom the living. In simple *forte* trombones in three-part harmony have an expression of heroic pomp, of majesty, of loftiness, which the prosaic commonplace of a vulgar melody could alone impair or destroy. They then acquire—with enormously increased grandeur—the expression of trumpets; they no longer menace, they proclaim; they chaunt instead of roar."

And of cymbals, that "Their quivering and shrill sounds ally themselves incomparably well, in certain cases, either with sentiments of extreme ferocity (then united to sharp whistlings of piccolo flutes, and to the stroke of the kettledrum or small drum), or with the feverish excitement of a bacchanalian orgy, where revelry verges upon frenzy. A vigorous and well marked rhythm gains greatly in an immense chorus, or in the dance tune of an orgy, if executed, not by a single pair of cymbals, but by four, six,

ten pairs, and even more, according to the space, and to the mass of other instruments and voices."

Writing of the bass tuba he says that "An idea can hardly be formed of the effect produced in grand military harmonies by a mass of bass tubas." Consider the size and sonority of a bass tuba, and then try to think of a " mass " of them !

But in these passages appears some suggestion at least, if not a likeness, of the vast, primitive intelligence that conceived them. A little knowledge of the subject upon which Berlioz was writing reveals the reason why this treatise is such fascinating reading ; it is really a book about Berlioz no less than about trumpets and viols. The dim, half-lighted pictures that we find there have features in common with the image that looked back upon Berlioz from the mirror of his life, and they are our best guides to an appreciation of the man he took himself

to be. The constant flight of his ideas from the region of the practical into the heaven of imagination was but the expression of his hunger for the infinite. It was sorrow to him that he could not span the seasons of seed-time and harvest within his own life. Amid the upheavals of the Revolution he had to be sowing when he would gladly have been reaping the harvest promised him in his dreams. Alas! They who work very much for the future have often to relinquish the fruits of the present. That they have some secret consolations we have, fortunately, no reason to doubt.

> **Verily now is our season of seed,**
> **Now in our Autumn; and Earth discerns**
> **Them that have served her in them that can read,**
> **Glassing, where under the surface she burns,**
> **Quick at her wheel, while the fuel, decay,**
> **Brightens the fire of renewal: and we?**
> **Death is the word of a bovine day,**
> **Know you the breast of the springing To-be.**

III.

The winning of honour, says Bacon, is

but the revealing of a man's virtue and worth without disadvantage ; and the task is made the harder since many of the worthiest and most truly virtuous make a poor enough show before the world. Yet it is by a man's conduct alone that we can estimate his character—giving to conduct its widest sense, not merely of action and achievement, but of effort, and the strife and action of the mind. We have seen that Berlioz's life as a musician was a brilliant failure ; that in his own eyes he was a prophet unheeded, crying in the wilderness, an unhappy and disappointed man ; and it remains for us to see that the sum of all his aspirations, fightings, disappointments, self-betrayals, and failures was a "revealing of virtue and worth," not without disadvantage, indeed, but in spite of disadvantages that would have obscured a less brilliant and noble flame.

That he was a genius of the first order there is no doubt. He had the inborn bent

for creation and invention that marks the true original, and every action of his life was stamped with the superscription of his native quality. His inventions in music are manifold: new rhythms, new harmonies, countless new combinations of instrumental tone, new dispositions and balance of masses in grand compositions were evolved by him. The very greatness of his ideas was often their ruin; now they were monsters that could not be brought to a timely birth, now they were born and grew up only to menace and tyrannise over him. Yet the ideas were there, looming primitive and vast in the twilight shadows of his imagination, although they often dwindled to something small and almost commonplace in the daylight of actual achievement. A miracle of invention was, for example, his famous scheme for an opera in which an impious monarch, holding a mock representation of the Resurrection, should be interrupted by the thunders

of the last Advent. The dramatic involution of that scheme, quite apart from its monstrous daring, could have been imagined by only a genius, as only a madman could have carried it out.

Unfortunately it is not enough to be a genius, if one would have the ear of the world. Berlioz, toiling up the slope of the wave, and seeing some of his fellow-students at the French Academy floating easily on its crest to popularity and fame, could gird at the injustice of it all; but he knew well that his own immediate fame could be purchased at a price, if only he could bring himself to pay it. No serious person would admit that there is anything essentially ignoble in success; but it is a fact that the success of nine men out of ten has involved capitulations. Not many, perhaps—the withdrawal of an outpost here, or a sentry there, a little falling back in this place, a suspicion of treachery in that: on the whole, a prudent

strengthening of the position, but—at a price. There is an eternity of difference between that kind of success and what we call the failure of one who has fallen back at no point, and although he may have gone down, has gone down with all his guns fighting and all his flags flying. He who makes bargains with destiny says that when he betters himself he necessarily makes the world better, that the higher he rises the greater will be his good influence. It is a fallacy; the weight of his influence is decreased by the amount of ballast he threw over in order to rise; and that he should or should not have been in King's houses will matter to the world a hundred years hence far less than that he should or should not have lived in unswerving loyalty to duty.

It was the jewel in Berlioz's life that he belonged to the small class of men who do not give in. Under no circumstances did he ever shirk what he conceived to be the

proper course for him to take; at whatever cost—and often the cost was frightfully bitter—he struggled on towards an ideal. There is a sublime and dreadful heroism in this course when it is taken by a man of passionate and sensitive temperament whose lot is cast in the stormiest corner of the world; once he has launched himself upon the flood, it is either die or surrender; and how long for him the struggle, how bitter the conflict, if he is to keep his breast to the torrent! In all Berlioz's life, and especially in his art, the stream of the world ran against him, setting back towards the ignoble and the easy and the conventional, and opposing the small band that fought for emancipation and progress. Not for one moment did he cease to resist that tide, and the mark of resistance is upon his musical creations. They have the exaggeration that is stamped upon all works of art which seek to state a principle or protest against

an abuse; the reformer was making use of the composer, with results satisfactory to neither.

But it is, unhappily, in Berlioz's love affairs that we find the tale of his loyalty to himself most clearly written. Unhappily, because loyalty to himself here caused trouble and sorrow to the objects of his devotion, and to himself as well. The story of his heart is in so great a degree the story of his life and one sees in it so faithful a picture of the man as he really was that this sketch would be incomplete without some attempt at an analysis of that stormy record.

How deep was the impression made on his childish mind by the vision of Estelle is shown by his return to her in old age, when the desires of his heart had one by one been lost to him or eluded his quest and when, with his hunger for affection and rest still unsatisfied, he turned with a kind of wistful appeal to the elderly matron who was

still the embodiment of his earliest adored ideal. The child with life all before him, the old man broken by the fight, with life behind him—they shared a common dream, a touching, pretty illusion that served them in place of the tragic reality of manhood.

But Berlioz, the fighting man, although he had many love affairs, had but one grand passion, one *mortel amour*. It rose and shone like a sun on his stormy life, to be eclipsed, alas, in mists drawn up by its very ardour. All of himself that he could deflect from his art was given to Henrietta Smithson, the lovely and brilliant Irish actress who took Paris by storm in the Shakespearian productions of 1827. Ophelia, Juliet and Henrietta were all revealed to him together, sweeping him off his feet and drowning him in a tide of poetry and romance, just as a Virgil and Estelle and the sound of a fountain and the scent of flowers had overwhelmed him years before. But now he was

a man, his nature had come to itself; and almost at once it seized upon him and whirled him away. Upon the heels of *mortel amour* followed a *léthargie morale*; although he had seen Ophelia, he did not dream that he should ever so much as speak to her; and he wandered away to be alone in his new world, his mind filled with ecstatic misery, careless of what he did or where his feet strayed, sleeping now amid the wheat-sheaves near Ville-Juif, now on the snow beside the frozen Seine, now upon a table in the Café du Cardinal.

It is characteristic of him that he did not attempt to make Miss Smithson's acquaintance in the ordinary way. The awakening of this great love was, for a time, enough. "It came to me," he afterwards wrote, "in my manhood; with Shakespeare in the burning bush of Sinai, amid the thunders and lightnings of poetry entirely new to me. It prostrated me, and my heart and whole

being were invaded by a cruel, maddening, passion, in which the love of a great artist and a great art were mingled together, each intensifying the other."

For a long time she never knew of his existence. Then he wrote an overture for a benefit performance at which she was to act, but, to his misery, she never heard it. Then he began to address passionate letters to her, which she had to tell her maid not to receive. Then he went to Rome, and it was not until five years after his first meeting with Miss Smithson that they became acquainted and were married.

In the meantime he had fancied himself in love with a lady who took upon herself to comfort him against Miss Smithson's neglect; quarrelled with her, and, upon hearing of her infidelity, set out from Italy to France disguised as a lady's-maid in order to kill the lady, her mother, and her lover. He fell hungry on the way, and abandoned

his project. The whole thing occupied about three weeks, and in Berlioz's life it was a mere incident. I mention it here as an instance of the way in which he carried out his impulses, often to a point far beyond absurdity.

When he returned from Rome his adoration for Miss Smithson awoke again. He determined to take her by storm; organised a grand concert, at which his *Roméo et Juliette* symphony was played, and, through some friends, procured the attendance of the beautiful Henrietta. She, poor thing, was in desperate financial trouble at the time, and the sight of the vast audience and orchestra and the agitated composer (whom she now recognised as her former persecutor) unnerved her. "What if he loved me still!"

The symphony was begun; something in its beauty and charm, I would fain believe, touched her heart; but Berlioz had left nothing to chance. Into the part of Lelio,

which was recited by Bocage, he had put his declaration :

"Oh! que ne puis-je la trouver, cette Juliette, cette Ophélie que mon cœur appelle! Que ne puis-je m'enivrer de cette joie mêlée de tristesse que donne le véritable amour, et un soir d'automne, bercé avec elle par le vent du nord sur quelque bruyère sauvage m'endormir enfin dans ses bras, d'un mélancholique et dernier sommeil."

"It is of me he speaks; he loves me still!" It was a strange betrothal, with the noise of the streets and the life of Paris flowing by outside the walls, and, within, the busy orchestra, the listening audience, the pleading and the yielding heart. For she did yield; and although troubles, crowned by a painful accident, crowded upon her, Berlioz entered into her life and swept them away. Not on an autumn evening on a wild moor, but in a little house in Paris one winter night he heard the north wind whistling down the street, and knew he was happy.

Madame Berlioz lived for twenty-one years after her marriage; seven of them, I think,

brought happiness to her and her husband—a big enough salvage from the inevitable wreck of an unwise marriage. The bald facts as we know them are that after seven years they separated; that almost immediately afterwards Berlioz fell into some degree of intimacy with a singer named Mdlle. Reccio; and that, on the death of his wife fourteen years afterwards, he married this lady. "Je me suis remarié—je le *devais*," is his remark upon the occurrence; except for an announcement of the lady's death it is his only reference to the second marriage, and, as such, is dismally significant.

It is a sordid enough tale; I make no attempt to disguise that; yet it is redeemed in some degree by the essential nobility of the two chief actors. Where the fault lay I do not pretend to decide; the general notion is that Berlioz gave his wife cause for her jealousy and ill-temper, and I think it more than likely. Yet Mr. W. H. Hadow, in his charming

study, goes so far as to say that the separation "had been mainly forced on him by her manner of life." There is no profit, at this distance of time, in probing such questions too deeply; I only say this much to indicate that the weight of blame need not be all on one side.

Is blame indeed a word to be used in this connection at all? I think not. It was impossible that Berlioz and his wife should live happily together; it is not enough that such people should have a deep affection for each other (there was never any doubt about that); they must also have that quality of compatability the absence of which brings shipwreck to thousands of marriages; and it is all to the credit of these two that they should have separated while they still loved each other, and that they should not have continued that dismal mockery of intimate life—loving and lacerating each other was Berlioz's own description of it—in which two

people wear each other down and narrow their lives into a stream of petty care, until love disappears.

It is good to know that Berlioz, all through those fourteen years of separation, worked hard to support his wife, and made many sacrifices, and performed the most dismal drudgery in order to nourish her when she was ill. How deeply he loved her is to be seen from his account of her death—words more eloquent and touching than are to be found in all his other writings.

"In the midst of all my past love," he says, "I felt almost overwhelmed by the immense, terrible, infinite pity inspired by the recollection of my poor Henrietta's sorrows: her ruin before our marriage, her accident, the failure of her last dramatic attempt in Paris, her voluntary but ever regretted renunciation of her adored art, her eclipsed glory, the rising fame and fortune of her mediocre imitators of both sexes, our

domestic differences, her inextinguishable jealousy (in the end not unfounded), our separation, the death of all her relations, the enforced absence of her son,[1] my long and frequent journeys, her wounded pride at being the cause of expense which she knew I could ill afford, the mistaken idea that the affection of the English public had been alienated from her by her love for France, her broken heart, her vanished beauty her ruined health, her increasing bodily sufferings, the loss of speech and movement, the impossibility of making herself understood, the long vista of death and oblivion."

There is a good deal of poor Henrietta's history in her husband's account of her funeral, so I quote it here.

"I was unaided in my sad duties. The Protestant pastor required for the ceremony

[1] Louis Berlioz, an officer in the French navy, died in 1868, a year before the death of his father.

lived in the suburbs at the other end of the town, in the Rue M. le Prince. I went to him at eight o'clock in the evening. An accidental circumstance led me past the Odéon. . . . How often, on winter nights, did I walk up and down under these arcades in feverish anxiety. There was the door by which I saw her enter for a rehearsal of 'Othello.' She did not then even know of my existence; and if a pale, worn, obscure youth, leaning against one of the pillars of the theatre and devouring her with wild glances had been pointed out as her future husband, she would assuredly have treated the idea as absurd.

"And yet it is he who is preparing for thy last journey, poor Ophelia, he is on his way to a priest, with Laertes's words in his mouth—'What ceremonies else?' he who so tormented thee, and so suffered through thee, after having suffered for thee; he who, in spite of all his wrongs, might say, like

Hamlet, 'Forty thousand brothers would not have loved her as I love her.'

"The next day, two or three of my literary friends—D'Ortigue, Brizeux, Léon de Wailly—and several artists, the good Baron Taylor, and a few other kind-hearted people, attended Henrietta to her last resting-place, *out of friendship for me.* Twenty-five years before, the whole of intelligent Paris would have attended her obsequies, in admiration and adoration of *her.* The poets, painters, and sculptors, the actors to whom she had just given such noble examples of movement, gesture, and attitude, musicians who had felt the melody of her tender accents and the lacerating reality of her cries of anguish—lovers, dreamers, philosophers—all would then have followed her coffin in tears. . . .

"And now, while she is proceeding thus almost in solitude to the cemetery, ungrateful and forgetful Paris is grovelling in its

own smoke; and he who, with all his love, has not the courage to follow her to the grave, weeps in her deserted garden."

Eight years afterwards Berlioz's second wife died, and it was some time after her burial that he had the dreadful experience at the Montmartre ceremony of seeing the remains of his poor Ophelia, during their removal to a new grave, exposed to his view after ten years. His description of that scene is a dreadfully vivid instance of the ruthless way in which he exposed himself to the most cruel experiences, and the adventure itself is an example of the kind of miseries and affronts, half tragic, half grotesque, with which the whole of his life was embittered.

This was the end of his manhood's love; afterwards he began to slide imperceptibly back towards the dream of his childhood and to the half-senile, wholly ideal adoration of Estelle. The way in

which this old man, embittered by failures and harrowed by misfortunes and sorrows, wandered back in search of his first adoration is a romance in itself, and the whole story is so thoroughly characteristic that I must ask for the indulgence of my readers while I make some outline of it.

It was a kind of harking back, of course, common enough in old men; but even this incident, grotesque and laughable as it would have been under ordinary circumstances, took on something rare and beautiful from Berlioz's character, so that we may smile but cannot laugh at it. He found his Estelle an old lady, widowed, and with a grown-up son, but in the eyes of Berlioz she had not yet outgrown the period of romance. She was still his Estelle, still his ideal vision of the Meylan flower garden; and he approached her as humbly and shyly as a child. That she should know he was near her, that he should be

sometimes in her thoughts, that she should read the books he sent her, that her lips should touch the paper on which she wrote to him, that she should think of him at half-past two when he was conducting the first performance of *Les Troyens*—these were the simple benefits for which he craved, the boyish plans he made for the sharing of happiness. That she treated him with an exquisite tenderness mingled with good common-sense, and so soothed and satisfied him, is apparent from her letters, one of which I must quote, as well as one of his written to her in order to show at its best this idyll of old age.

FIRST LETTER.

Paris, 27th September, 1864.

MADAME,

Your greeting was characterised by a simple and dignified kindliness of which few women would have been capable under such circumstances. A thousand blessings on you! Nevertheless, I have suffered cruelly since I left you. In vain do I tell myself that nothing could have been kinder than your reception, that any other would have been unsuitable or inhuman; my wretched heart bleeds as though it had been wounded. I ask

myself the reason, and this is what I find: It is *absence;* it is that I saw too little of you, that I did not say a quarter of what I had to say, and that I went away almost as though there were to be an eternal separation between us. And yet you gave me your hand—I pressed it to my forehead and my lips, and I restrained my tears, as I had resolved to do. But I feel an imperious, inexorable necessity for further speech with you, which I hope you will not refuse me. Remember that I have loved you for forty-nine years, that I have loved you from my childhood, notwithstanding the storms that have devasted my life. The proof of this is the deep emotion I now feel; if it had really ceased to exist, even for a day, it could never have revived under existing circumstances.

Has any woman ever listened to such a declaration as this? Don't take me for a fool who is the sport of his imagination. I am not a fool; I am gifted with a keen sensitiveness, combined, believe me, with great quickness of insight. But my true affections are intensely powerful, and of an unalterable constancy. I have loved you, I still love you, I shall always love you. And yet I am sixty-one years of age. I know the world, and have no illusions left. Grant me then—not as a sister of charity ministering to a sick man, but as noble-hearted woman healing the sorrows of which she is the unconscious cause—the three things which alone can restore my peace of mind: permission to write to you occasionally, an assurance that my letters shall be answered, and a promise that you will invite me to visit you at least once a year. My visits might be inopportune, and therefore troublesome, if they were made without your permission, and so I will never go either to Geneva or elsewhere unless you write the word "Come!"

Who could find anything unsuitable or odd in this? What can be more pure than such a relationship? Are we not both free? Who could be heartless or senseless enough to blame us? No one, not even your sons, who are, as I know, most distinguished young men. I must, however, confess that it would

be dreadful to see you only in the presence of others. If you bid me come, I must be able to converse with you as I did at our first interview last Friday—an interview which I dared not prolong, and which I could not enjoy because of my terrible efforts to restrain my emotions,

Oh! madame, madame, I have but one aim left in the world—that of obtaining your affection. Suffer me to try and attain it. I will be discreet and reserved; our correspondence shall not be more frequent than you desire. It shall never become a wearisome task to you; a few lines from your hand will suffice. My visits can only be few and far between, but I shall know that in thought we are no longer apart, and that after the many years in which I have been nothing to you, I have at least the hope of becoming your friend. And a devoted friend such as I shall be is rare. I shall surround you with tenderness profound and sweet, and with an entire affection in which the innocent effusion of the child will mingle with the feelings of the man. Perhaps you will find some charm in it, perhaps you will one day say, "I am your friend," and admit that I am deserving of your friendship.

Farewell, madame; I have just re-read your note of the 23rd, and at the end I perceive the assurance of your affectionate sentiments. This is not a commonplace formality, is it?—is it?

Yours eternally,

HECTOR BERLIOZ.

P.S.—I am sending you three books; perhaps you will not mind looking at them in your spare moments. You understand it is a pretext of the author's to lead you to think a little of him.

ANSWER.

Lyons, September 29th, 1864.

MONSIEUR,

I should feel guilty towards both myself and you if I did not at once reply to your last letter, and to your dream of the relation

which you wish to establish between us. I am going to speak—my hand on my heart.

I am but an old, a very old woman, six years older than you; my heart is withered by days of anguish, physical and mental distress of all sorts, which have left me without illusions as to the joys and sentiments of this world. Twenty years have passed since I lost my best friend. I have sought no other; only kept up such as arose from old relationships and natural family ties, since the fatal day on which I was left a widow. I have said goodbye to all pleasures and amusements, in order to devote myself entirely to my children and my home. This has been my life for the past twenty years; it has became a habit with me, the charm of which cannot now be broken, for in such close intimacy alone can I find peace for the few days remaining to me on this earth, and everything that troubled their uniformity would be painful and burdensome.

In your letter of the 27th you tell me that your only wish is to become my friend through an interchange of letters. Do you seriously think that this is possible? I scarcely know you. I saw you for a few minutes last Friday, the first time for forty-nine years. I cannot, therefore, rightly estimate either your tastes, your temper, or your qualities, which alone can form a foundation of friendship. When two people have the same way of feeling and seeing things, there is a possibility of sympathy between them; but when they are separated, correspondence alone cannot establish what you look for from me. For my part, I believe it to be impossible. Besides, I must confess that I am extremely lazy about writing; my mind is as inert as my fingers. I have the greatest difficulty in fulfilling even my most necessary duties in this respect. I could not, therefore, promise to keep up a sustained correspondence with you. I should break my promise too often. forewarn you. If you like to write to me sometimes, I shall receive your letters, but do not look for exact or speedy answers.

You also wish me sometimes to ask you to come and see me. That is no more possible than to say,

'You will find me alone." On Friday I chanced to be alone when I received you; but when I shall be living with my son and his wife at Geneva, if I am by myself when you come, well and good; but if they are with me at the time, you will have to put up with their presence, for I should be extremely displeased if it were otherwise.

I have told you my thoughts and feelings with perfect frankness. I think I ought to remind you that there are certain dreams and illusions which should be abandoned when we come to white hairs, and with them to the disenchantment of all fresh feelings, even those of friendship, which can have no charm unless they are the result of relations established in the happy days of youth. To my mind, it is not a moment for beginning them when the weight of years is beginning to be felt, and when their number has taught us how easy it is to be deceived. I confess that I have arrived at that point. The future is daily advancing. Why form relations to be born to-day and perish to-morrow? Why give occasion for fresh regrets?

In all that I have just said, do not think I have any intention of offending against your remembrance of me. I respect its persistency, and am much touched by it. You are still very young in heart, but with me it is otherwise. I am altogether old. I am good for nothing, except to keep, believe me, a large place in my memory for you. I shall always hear of your future triumphs with pleasure. Farewell, monsieur. Again I sign myself affectionately yours, EST. F——.

I received the three volumes you so kindly sent me yesterday morning. Many thanks for them.

This remarkable friendship existed until Berlioz's death and was the only comfort of his last years, which were embittered by the death of his son and by the failure of

Les Troyens. Madame F——'s good sense prevented it from degenerating to the absurdity into which Berlioz, if his impetuosity had been unchecked, would no doubt have led it, but she remained gentle and affectionate to him always. "Believe me," she wrote, "I have some pity for unreasonable children. I have always found that the best way to make them calm and reasonable was to amuse and give them pictures. I take the liberty of sending you one which will recall to you the reality of the present, and destroy the illusions of the past." How little effect this gentle hint had may be gathered from Berlioz's comment, "It was her portrait! Adorable creature!" And yet, if I have at all succeeded in drawing the man as I conceive him to have been, this scene of old age will be very far from ridiculous, and not altogether unworthy of the strenuous and stormy drama to which it is the epilogue. I have dwelt at length

upon the affairs of his heart because equally with his music they were the urgent affairs of his life; almost the whole flood of his life was poured into these two channels. "Which of the two powers," he said, "Love or Music, can elevate man to the sublimest heights? It is a great problem, yet it seems to me that this is the answer: Love can give no idea of Music; Music can give an idea of Love. Why separate them? They are the two wings of the soul."

I hope I have now made clear my view of Berlioz—that he lived not the coward's but the hero's life. We are not his judges, to say how far the best of him was fulfilled; we have not to condemn what may seem to us his frailties; but we may read and mark in the tempestuous scroll of his life the unswervingly loyal response that he made to calls that came from within. Impulses, we may call them, and write him down impulsive; and yet to be consistently im-

pulsive is a far from ignoble rule of conduct. It becomes noble when the consequences of every impulsive act are bravely met, but it involves damage and suffering to the heart that none but heroes are able to sustain. Where such men transgress, they suffer; and there is an end of it so far as we are concerned.

Berlioz suffered for his very virtues. He was, as I conceive him, a man of so fine a temper that he had a hundred vulnerable parts where you and I have one; of so great a capacity for happiness that the world's measure of joy scarce filled the bottom of his cup; of so delicate a sense of pain that he fell wounded where we should go unscathed; of so high a conception of his life's purpose that his harvest of attainment was like Dead Sea fruit in his grasp. To fulfil his own nature was his only law, and if it led him to those rare heights that few can climb, to the Pisgah

where empty hearts may brim again, it led him also through wastes of desert fatal to the half-hearted, the unsalted, but cleansing if we can bare ourselves to sun and sand.

This, then, was Berlioz's ordeal, the ordeal of every noble, intemperate heart that struggles under the tyranny of monster ideas and, aspiring to the highest, is yet betrayed, now by "what is false within," now by the very keenness of perception that makes it consciously heroic. We see Berlioz in the fires of that ordeal, which illuminate even while they sear, but we may deem ourselves fortunate if we discern even a glimmering of truths that were made radiantly clear to him in hours of bitterest endurance there.

POSTSCRIPT.

IT has been my design in these sketches to abstain from criticism, and merely to gossip for a little while upon some subjects which are of engrossing interest to me. On that account I hope to be forgiven many faults which might not be excused in formal criticisms. In writing about any kind of art, a man may set out upon one of two roads: he may record his own personal impressions about things without attempting to judge or assess their respective values; or he may draw upon his stores of knowledge, and, putting aside all personal feeling, set himself to estimate and to criticise. In both of these tasks it is essential beyond

all else that the writer be absolutely honest in thought and word—and every critic knows that such rigid honesty is only to be achieved by an austere discipline. I did not feel prepared to deliver a critical judgment upon the music and musicians I have written about, but I had a very strong impulse to attempt a truthful record of the effect that certain works (differing widely one from the other) produce on a single mind. And, like the traveller in the Cevennes who scattered small change on the mossy carpet of his chamber among the pines of Lozère, it has pleased me to offer here such small coins of gratitude as my means afford.

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